


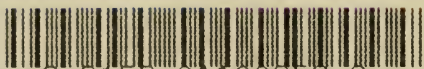

**DANCE  
AS AN  
ART FORM**

**LA MERI**



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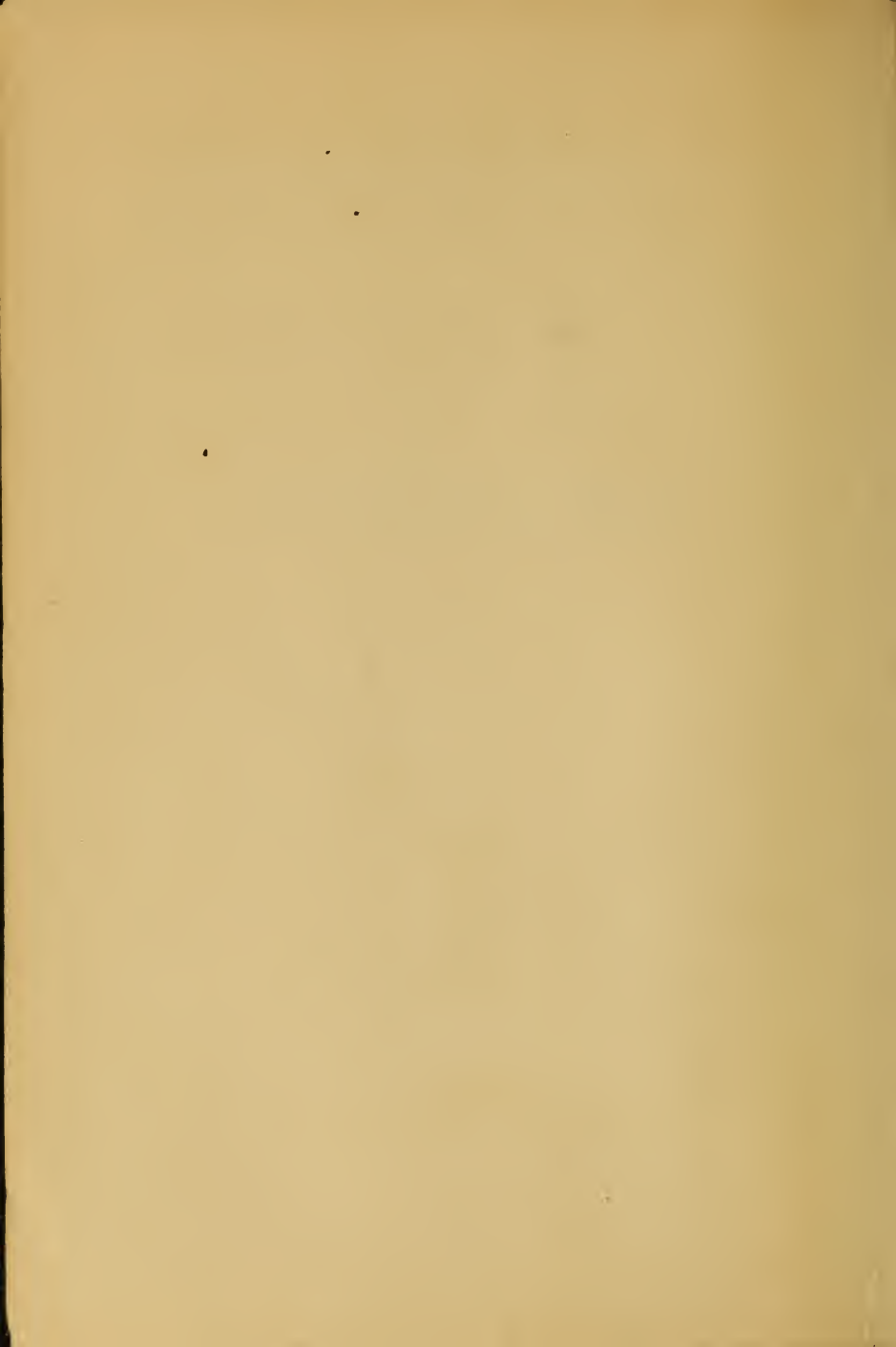
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DANCE AS AN ART-FORM



# DANCE AS AN ART-FORM

*ITS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT*

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To

GUIDO CARRERAS,

*whose untiring guidance has opened many  
vistas to a finer appreciation of the  
Dance-Art, this little book is  
gratefully dedicated.*

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DANCE AS AN ART-FORM



# I

## FOREWORD

**T**O condense into 192 pages a comprehensive view of the dance-art is much like attempting to force the poor camel through the needle's eye! Yet as time to-day has become the most precious of all commodities, it must be saved; and so you who read this must have in the shortest possible time, a general assortment of information on dancing which will enable you to at least listen intelligently when the subject is being discussed. Stop! Do not throw this poor book away unread, believing the hour it will cost you will still leave you in that same awkward position of listener which you so despise, be the subject what it may. I dare say I have exaggerated the effect of my booklet on the nether side. For surely experience should have taught me that knowledge of the true basic principles of the dance-art are as unknown among general society as advanced astrology! No, I think I can safely predict that once having conned these pages you will be in a position to expound on dancing with such conviction as to leave your impromptu audience quite awestruck; for it is safe to assume that not ten percent of those you meet will know half of what is in these pages.

I hasten to explain that this book is not for the finished artist, nor for the philosophic æsthete. It is expressly written to help, in quite another way, the experienced professionals of the intellectual dance: by teaching those who watch them, who study with them, and who write about them to appreciate more fully their art.

For the ignorance prevailing in this world anent the old-new art of dancing is appallingly profound! Little Mary wants to study "fancy-dancing," so her fond Mamma takes her to a maestro and assures him that "Mary has the most astounding talent! She dances about all by herself whenever we turn on the gramophone!" And the poor maestro, who has spent the best fifteen years of his life bringing his art to a point of justification, sighs and agrees on Mary's genius; or, perhaps, flies into a righteous rage of unutterable weariness, and loses a paying pupil. If this book can convince Mary and Mamma of the seriousness of this art, will it not save many teachers many harrowing moments? How many hundreds of artists to-day fling the pearls of their work at the feet of an audience which cannot distinguish the difference between the finish of years of study and the glamour of the "society" dancer's expensive costumes? Are these pages not justified if they teach the "vox populi" to weed from the concert stage the rich amateur who chokes so insistently the theatres and billboards all over Christendom? And

last, the most important, if the movie-reviewer and sports-writer, whose editor has forced him to masquerade as dance-critic, can be persuaded (which I doubt!) to read these pages and learn the difference between Spanish and ballet dancing, something will be accomplished.

The dance cannot be judged save by the yardstick of its own ideals. Considering the intention of the school, one should not fail to enjoy a ballet-dancer because he is not natural, nor a Hindu dancer because his face is expressionless. By the term dance-art I mean those forms of the dance which are didactic, which conform to æsthetic principles, and which, by skill and taste, create beauty.

If I have neglected to treat the dance of any country, as, for example, Central Africa, the omission is not caused by lack of respectful interest in that country's folk-art, but because it has not yet, to my knowledge, been brought to the theatre in a serious authentic form.

The purpose of these pages is to present to the reader a concise view of the basic principles upon which rests the technique and spirit of the different types of dancing now being presented by serious artists for æsthetic judgment.

I have touched but lightly on the seemingly eternal conflict between the traditionalist and the liberator. This condition has existed since the birth of art, and will, doubtless, continue to exist for ever

in spite of us "pacifists" who would prefer to see the advancement of the art than of the art-form. The insertion of the history of the Occidental dance-art has seemed necessary if the reader is to understand fully the growth of the art, the grounding of its traditions, and the inspiration of its principles.

To him for whom this condensed, basic information is sufficient I have no further apologies to make. For him who, having gained the "sample" seeks further to fill himself, I have added a list of books which will carry him further along the road of knowledge of the dance-art.

If certain types of dances herein treated are not represented in the bibliography it is because that which I have written has been gained solely by personal study and observation, and I know of no information about them which has hitherto been gathered into book form.

To some readers, perhaps, the book will seem too simple to be interesting; but he who finds *nothing* here that he did not know before is one who will rid himself of many tiresome questioners by having on his book-shelves a copy to lend to persistent seekers-after-information.

To him who, on finishing the book, exclaims, "I knew all this before!" I can only apologise and regret that he did not go against his prevailing habit and really read the foreword first!



## II

### IN DEFENCE OF DANCING

THE Dance is an art, and as such needs no defence.

Let us first examine the meaning of the word "art." According to Webster it is "skill in performance acquired by experience, study or observation; application of skill and taste to production according to æsthetic principles."

Havelock Ellis, less concerned with the word itself than with the spirit behind it, declares art to be "the active, practical exercise of a single discipline," and "concerned with the more or less unconscious creation of beauty."<sup>1</sup> Whether you adopt the cold definition of Webster or the more profound one of Ellis matters little since the former in using the phrase "according to æsthetic principles," and the latter by writing "the creation of beauty" have both definitely proven that the dance is an art.

In the beginning the dance was life. Science and legend agree that the cosmos moves in a rhythmic beat: Hindu philosophy believes that the gods who created the cosmos were themselves created by the dance: unromantic historians, telling the greatest

<sup>1</sup> Havelock Ellis, "The Dance of Life," Conclusion (end of Part III).

romance of all, say that man's first emotional impulse found outlet through the dance. Absolute in the primitive man was dancing the ritual of religion. Inarticulate, he, like the waves of the mighty sea, praised his God in rhythm. By inverse reasoning, he exorcised his devils in the same way. Prayer, ritual, worship, and ceremony were the dance. Every family, every tribe, every race had its god. How many of these gods, both primitive and modern, were dancers can never be computed, since every form of religion in the early years of its purest sincerity made the dance an integral part of its worship.

Yet we know that the Hindu Nataraja<sup>2</sup> was the "Lord of Dancers"; that Ame-No-Uzume<sup>3</sup> brought forth the sun by dancing; that Athenæum speaks of "Apollo, the Dancer"; and that Dante<sup>4</sup> pictures Christ as the Centre of the Circling Dancers of Heaven. These dancing gods were worshipped through the dance. The devadasi is the avowed bride of her god-head; the miko is consecrated to a life of prayer and praise; the vestal

<sup>2</sup> Amongst the greatest of the names of Siva is Nataraja, "Lord of Dancers or King of Actors," "The Dance of Siva," Coomeraswamy.

<sup>3</sup> In one of the oldest legends of Japan we are told that the Sun-Goddess, Amaterasu, being angry, hid herself in a cave so that the world was plunged in darkness. Amongst the immortals was beautiful Ame-No-Uzume; they sent her to dance and sing at the mouth of the cave, and the goddess . . . emerged from her concealment to gaze upon the dancer. "The Japanese Dance," Introduction, Marcelle A. Hincks.

<sup>4</sup> "Divine Comedy," Paradise, Canto XIII, 1 to 26; Canto XX, 141; Canto XXIII, 21; Canto XXIV, 17, 18, 19; Canto XXV, 103-108; Canto XXVIII, 15; Canto XXIX, 55; Canto XXX.



virgin was the holiest woman of Greece; and King David himself danced, naked, before the Ark of the Covenant. Could these who dedicated their lives to the concentrated "experience, study and observation" of the dance bring to it more skill of performance? Could they more profoundly desire to dance a truth which would teach the multitudes and find approbation in His Sight? So the dance was born the highest of arts, and was nurtured the most respectful and respected of man's expressions.

No less an art, if the production of beauty is an art, was the dance in its other eternal form, as an earthlier prayer to a mortal love. The peacock, to attract the hen, spreads his tail and moves with stately step about her. The Australian bushman, in paint and feathers, dances for the delight of certain eyes. And Johnny, gorgeous in his first "tux," takes his "girl" to a dance! The intimate association of the dance with sex has in nowise impaired it as an art, having, indeed, immeasurably enriched it: but it has been the cause of its æsthetic failure. Poverty of true æsthetics has induced the decline of the dance-art, and the existence of the dance which is not an art.

"Æsthetics," says Webster, "is the theory or philosophy of taste; the sense of the beautiful." "Æsthetics," says Ellis,<sup>5</sup> "is the philosophic appreciation of any or all arts," and "is concerned with

<sup>5</sup> Havelock Ellis, "The Dance of Life," Conclusion (end of Part III).

its discovery and contemplation." Art, then, is creative; æsthetics, reflective. Creation of the dance by him who seeks passionately to state in rhythmic movement the truth within his own soul, is yet, as always, an art. But the science of taste, the discovery of beauty has gone aground on the strange man-made shoals of the sin-of-sex. This most unnatural of all man's stupidities has brought down upon the head of the dance banishment into the outer void, and she who was born the first of all arts has been declared by the thoughtless as not even worthy of the name! Some fifty years ago, the dance, weakened by condemnation of the Church (that institution which owed her most) lay down in comatose death before the onslaughts of an insincere society. But as God created the worlds by His Art, so true art will not die while His worlds exist.

The historical side of the re-birth of dance has been fully taken up in the chapter on its history. It is sufficient here to say that it was re-born gloriously, an accepted art; but that æsthetically it still struggles, suffering not through æsthetics, but through lack of it. Among the physical watchers of, and the spiritual partakers in the art, æsthetes, those who are born with the perceptivity of perfect beauty, are too few. The moment has come for the æsthetic education of the audience.

Æsthetic education would be comparatively easy

of accomplishment were it, like many other forms of education, a matter of certain rules and customs. But æsthetics is the "discovery and contemplation" of beauty. Easy enough the contemplation of the beauty your brother has discerned; but the discovery of beauty is the result of a carefully developed taste, a conscientiously-sought truth, and a rigidly-practised sincerity. Yet no study yields so gracious a harvest. Indeed, by neglecting it one renounces a rich birth-right, since beauty is "the exclusive property of the individual who experiences it."<sup>6</sup> Beauty lies in reflection, and this reflection, this contemplation, is æsthetics. You yourself are the mirror and if your mind is silver-clear, then beauty is reflected therein; but the dust on the mirror obscures the soul of the reflection and leaves only the muddled outlines. As care cleans the surface of the mirror, so culture clears the surface of the mind.

To see beauty one must clear one's mind of the weeds of false opinions, and make it fertile with study; then will the seeds of truth fall upon the ready soil to blossom in loveliness and give forth fruit an hundredfold. Let us not take our opinions ready-made from others. Let us not believe that because the familiar art is a beautiful one, therefore the beautiful art must be a familiar one. If we cannot see beauty, let us not declare it nonexistent, but

<sup>6</sup> John Martin, in an article in the *New York Times*.

let us have the courage to admit that as yet we are blind to it. For though it is true that "knowledge of Ideal Beauty is not to be acquired, but is born with us,"<sup>7</sup> yet is it also true that æsthetics is "partly native and partly cultivated."<sup>8</sup> Only a profound and humble sincerity will uncover the native æsthete or cultivate the ability to taste beauty. And yet it is not beauty that must be sought, but truth, for all truth is beautiful in the æsthetic meaning of the word. It is not beauty the artist burns to portray, but truth.

It is not beauty the æsthete seeks to see, but truth as it is seen through the temperament of the creating artist. The function of technique is only to stimulate in the watcher the original emotion which, within the artist, gives birth to the work. The art of art is to excite the imagination of the spectator to the emotion of beauty. The audience is half the performance of any art, since without the fine-tuned "receiving-set" the melody, no matter how perfect, is lost in the void. The receiving-set of judgment must be attuned to the length of the waves, or the static of imperfect discernment coarsens and spoils all. "A judgment arrived at without initial effort at comprehension is a worthless judgment";<sup>9</sup> If beauty is sought and it lies only in

<sup>7</sup> Blake, William.

<sup>8</sup> Coomeraswamy, "The Dance of Siva," Hindu View of Art-Theory of Beauty.

<sup>9</sup> Ruth Seinfeld, in an article on Mary Wigman published in *The Dance* magazine.



truth, is it not more to the point that in seeking the truth of the impulse one should understand the means through which it is expressed? Most necessary to those who are not born æsthetes is the knowledge of the intended technical vehicle of the artist. Can we appreciate Chinese poetry if we do not speak Chinese? How, then, can we judge the ballet of Java unless we know its ideal of virtuosity?

Democracy, in its first throes, has created a public of mixed classes which finds profound all that which it cannot understand. And, hand in hand with this hysteria for "something deep," is an overweening desire to express an opinion, no matter whether an opinion actually exists or not. Generally the most garrulous opinion is the one which has just been borrowed from the conversation of others. The artistic danger of the "herd instinct" in the audience cannot be overestimated. *He who praises without thought is more dangerous than he who condemns without consideration.* "The task of æsthetics is to see art as beauty and to sweep away all that is ultimately found to be fundamentally ugly—whether distastefully pretty or hopelessly crude."<sup>10</sup>

From the beginnings the inspiration of art has been religion—witness the immortal statues of Greek gods and the religious subjects of Oriental dances—and the support of art has been the kings!

<sup>10</sup> Havelock Ellis, "Dance of Life," Conclusion (beginning of Part IV).

To-day the mass has destroyed both ruler and religion. Will it take the place of these two toward the arts? Will it do what Lorenzo de Medici did for Michelangelo? Or what Louis XIV did for the ballet? Can it inspire a Last Supper? Or a Buddha of Kamakura? The necessity of the cultivation of æsthetics, then, is a more profound one than would appear at first glance. Not only does it open the door to the divine power of "enjoying without possessing," but it has a deeper obligation—that of the growth of art. With a changing civilisation the modes of expression of eternal emotions change. Progress, gaining new qualities, discards old ones. This is the law of evolution. Artist and æsthete create the changes; concerning themselves with truth alone, the former finds his expression the natural one which comes as though by predestination,<sup>11</sup> and the latter, using imagination as the key, applauds the truth, no matter the guise in which he sees it. Only he who creates without sincere artistry, and he who watches without true æstheticism, loses truth under form. It is for this reason that in reading philosophers of whatever age one finds always vindication of new forms. New forms need vindication to the "herd-bound" audience (it is easy to see the beauty discovered by your brother!). It is not the form itself that is supported but the principle of the change of forms. An interesting ex-

<sup>11</sup> Ellis, "The Dance of Life," "The Art of Writing."

ample of this has recently been called to the public attention. Fokine, great choreographer, when he led the Romantic Revolution of the Russian Ballet into the new form which we came to know as the Dhiégliév Ballet, wrote words which can to-day be put into the mouths of the very Free Dancers whom he denounces: "Every form of dancing is good insofar as it expresses the content or subject with which the dance deals, and that form is the most natural which is most suited to the purpose of the dancer. . . . No one form of dancing should be accepted once and for all. . . . We shall create in each case a new form corresponding to the subject."<sup>12</sup> No finer creed for the immortal liberator has ever been written.

But it is not with the support of either the traditional or free expression that I here concern myself, but rather with the pressing necessity of developing in the "other half," viz., the audience, of the dance-art an æsthetic sense which will surely and faultlessly recognise the true standard of the dance-art, and, recognising, even augment it. It will not follow that the development of this sense will cause a world-wide agreement on form. On the contrary! Yet the opinions arrived at in that Golden Age will be sincere, and only true artists who know that their art is the start and goal of all ambition, will remain to give the best of their ex-

<sup>12</sup> From an article by John Martin in the *New York Times*.

pression for judgment. Creative tolerance, being unmoved alike by mere prettiness or ponderous edification, finds even in a broken fragment of artistic sincerity perfect satisfaction.

Between the public who, however unconsciously, does seek beauty, and the artist who has found it, there lie two formidable barriers: the semi-artist and the critic. "Criticism is akin to genius."<sup>13</sup> The true critic is a true æsthete, one whose æstheticism is divinely native as well as carefully cultivated. He is, as the seismograph is tuned to the breathing of the earth, most sensitively attuned to the faintest vibrations of beauty. He is a priest whose privilege is to interpret to the people the beauty he sees by heaven-sent intuition. His duty is to sink himself in self-oblivion until his personal taste ceases to be, and he comes to know that the form, the material, even the meaning, do not matter, but that experience is beautiful and therefore worthy. We have, God wot, few enough of these! The average critic to-day is one who is "trying to get on in the world," and is more concerned with the turn of a phrase than the truth of a statement. "That," says he, "is my opinion! You can take it or leave it!" Not many months past I have heard an eminent Parisian critic say what he dare not write—that Duncan was no dancer, but only a pretty, barefooted woman. He did not like her

<sup>13</sup> Coomeraswamy, "Dance of Siva," That Beauty Is a State.



type of work, and that was enough grounds for condemnation. He did not take into consideration that, whatever her vehicle of expression, she was so inherent a dancer, so thorough an artist, that her message of artistic truth, as she conceived it, opened a new epoch for the dance-art. Historically she looms high above the cavilling of forms, since with one sweep she inspired to a new beauty the established form, and quickened to life the newer forms. Æsthetic philosophy distorted by personal taste or lack of personal culture (which is, sadly enough, often the case) is no longer æsthetic philosophy, for consecration to either æsthetics or philosophy does not lead to narrowness. A floundering public guided by an uncultured critic has only too often shut the door against a perfect art which needed only the mirror of æstheticism to find consummation; while that public laid its treasures at the clay feet of an "art" of the mode. The critic must "comprehend the artist's own values":<sup>14</sup> he must "perceive the beauty of which the artist has exhibited the signs";<sup>15</sup> he must in consideration of the far-reaching consequences of his writing forearm himself with knowledge. Recreating in the abiding, repeatable form of printed words the transient expression of motion of the creative dancer, the critic strengthens with knowledge the

<sup>14</sup> Croce, "Æsthetic."

<sup>15</sup> Coomeraswamy, "The Dance of Siva," That Beauty Is a State.

eyes of the public that they may go again to the altar of beauty to seek for the light of truth.

By no means the least of the maladies of the dance-art is the semi-artist. By semi-artist I designate all those dancers who have not the humility to divine the truth nor the sincerity to seek for it. Artistry is a quality of the soul, not a matter of public position. The true artist does not set out to create beauty for the applause of the multitude; this is an ambition which might be called by him "greed." He is like the Devotee who works for his Ideal, and for none else. In the depths of his soul he finds a truth which by its light will consume him if he does not bring it forth. This truth, if God has made him a dancer, will find expression in rhythmic movement. "Where there is none to admire your works, not even a single person to encourage, there lives infinite patience, eternal contentment, and absolute fearlessness in works. Where there are thousands of people to admire—a most selfish man can also give up life in order to prove himself as a great hero."<sup>16</sup> I do not mean by this that the artist is indifferent to appreciation and understanding. He burns to show to others, not himself dancing, but the truth which God has shown him. Misunderstanding of the sincerity of his message is the heaviest of crosses. But neither misunderstanding,

<sup>16</sup> Lwami Paramananda in "The Path of Devotion," pp. 22 and 23.

nor indifference, nor jeers will hinder the unceasing expression of his message.

The semi-artist, that bacillus which battens on sensationalism and society, is a very real menace to the dance-art. He copies the modes and manners of the great dancer; he follows the fashion of the moment; he seeks always the easiest route; he fawns on society and eagerly licks up their thoughtless compliments; he spends his fortunate thousands on a few lessons, expensive costumes, and chic presentations. As long as he knows the admiration of the little circle that surrounds him he is content, affecting a strange temperament and basking in empty smiles. But let for a moment the darkness of discouragement fall, and he retires in a pet, for there is no inner truth to sustain him, no message that "must be said and said clearly at all costs."<sup>17</sup> Adversity is the acid test for the artist. Let him pass through and see if he come out whole! "He who dances must pay the piper," and a dear payment it is sometimes, since the true message is by no means enough. There is knowledge to attain, culture of mind, and infinite training of the body-instrument. I have heard that one of the greatest violinists of to-day has said that "genius is one-tenth inspiration and nine-tenths perspiration." Consider the percentage who have the divine inspiration, and then subtract seventy-five per cent

<sup>17</sup> Coomerawamy, "Dance of Siva," Hindu View of Art (Historical).

of those as wanting in sufficient "perspiration," and the few left are the geniuses! The instrument must be properly tuned to play the melody; the tabernacle must be worthy of the Ideal; the fire must burn strong enough to send the message. "To learn to dance is the most austere of disciplines."<sup>18</sup>

Truly we are sadly lacking in humility—audience, and critic, and dancer alike. For art is composed of three substances—Truth, Labor, and Humility—"and greatest of these" is Humility!

Dancing as an art to-day does not suffer. Indeed it is in better hands than it has been since the glory of Greece—the hands of a youth made old by war.

This youth has lifted it like a torch of liberty. "Let us have Freedom!" they have preached through the dance. "Fearless in works," they have conquered the hoary prejudices clinging since the days of conquering Rome. By battle they have achieved freedom for their art; let them teach æsthetics through peace. It is not conquering, but teaching, that lies before us now. Who would not know the joy of æsthetics could he but taste it? We have gained the citadel; let us join hands, and going forth together show the philistine the beauty for which we have cried!

"May we never hate each other!

Om! Peace, peace, peace!"<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ellis, "The Dance of Life," The Art of Morals.

<sup>19</sup> Sanskrit Prayer.



### III

#### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OCCIDENTAL DANCE-ART

THE Dance is, undoubtedly, the oldest of the arts, for rhythm was the first-born element of music and was created for and with the dance. No sooner did man walk than he began to give vent to his simple emotions by swaying his body and beating his feet. This, then, is the origin and definition of the dance—the expression of emotion through rhythmic, physical movement. Go to the beginnings of history, or go to the most primitive races to-day (for the history of human development can be traced and studied through the cultural planes of the existing races) and you will find the dance an important factor in every ritual. Birth, death, coronation, marriage, battle, courtship, worship—all are celebrated with dance. It is the handmaiden to that mistress of mortal life, love. Love is the cause of birth, the object of life, and the consolation of death. It may debase the dance to the lowest levels of eroticism, but it may also exalt it to the highest form of devout worship of a high God. It is to be remarked to the credit of erring mankind that there exist religious

dances in their thousands while those of pure eroticism are comparatively rare. Indeed, eroticism in primitive races is nearly unknown. Among simple people sex is a natural thing, a mysterious gift of a God, in some cases even an awesome magic. So the folk dances of courtship are frank, healthy and singularly free of the spirit that shocks the conservative. Even the instinctive bodily movements centring in sex are natural, unconscious, unsoiled by evil thoughts, and consequently pure.

But it is religion, that desire to worship a mighty God in exaltation, that has been the richest source of choreography. We see by going to those races oldest in civilisation that scarcely a dance exists whose roots are not in the soil of religious adoration. More than six thousand years ago Egypt used lavishly the dance as a religious ceremonial. And readers of the Old Testament, that book which tells of the very creation of the earth, will find many phrases proving the high place of the dance in the ancient worship of Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> God is never far from the childlike mind, and emotional ecstasy in that same mind is most spontaneously expressed through physical movement. Thus we find that the first expression of religion was the dance; that the first motive of the dance was religion.

With this concept well absorbed, it is easy to

<sup>1</sup> A carefully compiled book, "The Sacred Dance," has been written by W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D., Vicar of St. Alban's, Acton Green, London, giving many Biblical references to the dance.

understand why the dancing of different races is as fundamentally different as the races themselves. Even as different peoples in different climes covered their bodies differently against a different nature, so they were brought automatically to different movements in the physical expression of their exaltation. The nature of the soil they trod and the consequent attire-defence of their feet had a most important influence on the respective peculiarity of their steps, and their carriage of the body. Those races who adored their gods in nature and the elements express that adoration with a straight back, hands and arms in upward movement, and eyes raised to the skies. Those races whose actual gods are man-made idols, worship with body crouched and eyes on their own level. Those races who worship an unseen God do so with prostrate body and eyes downcast. Thus each race developed its own especial technique of dancing in accordance with its climate, religion, garments, and body-carriage. To-day we visit races in various stages of evolution and we find the technique of their dance-art advanced only in so far as those who exercise it. The aboriginal Australians give deep significance to their totemic dances which they perform in huge, crude headdresses of feathers and twigs, and the only technique of which is to move in a circle around the fire. The Mexican national dance, the Jarabe Tapatio, is performed in bright-colored

garments of Aztec origin, and its technique is an extremely difficult combination of the advanced footwork of Aztec and Spaniard. And the Hindu tells, through the dance, the abstract legends of the spiritual loves of his gods in costumes whose minute details defy description, and whose every gesture is laden with meaning and refined by centuries of elaborate stylisation.

From Egypt came the beginnings of the Occidental dance-art. We know that cymbals, tambourines, castanets, and the guitar were all used by them, and that Gadir (Cadiz), the first centre of European dancing, borrowed their choreography direct from the Nile. Although the birth of the dance-art in India is shrouded in the mists of antiquity, we may be justified in supposing that it, also, came originally from mighty Egypt.

The purest form of artistic development was achieved by the Greeks. For them beauty had value as itself, in itself, and for itself. By whichever of their many names they called it, beauty was the god of the Greeks. They recognised that the most beautiful creation of a High God is the human body; and the most perfect expression of the human body is the dance. So their dance, following the natural lines of the body, eschewing the traditional, the macabre, the acrobatic, the novel, came to be, like beauty, sufficient unto itself. Where heretofore the occidental dance-art had been a



means for the community to celebrate some important happening, now it became itself the reason for performance. It came to be admired not because of the emotion it evoked, but because of its own beauty and purity of line.

This is the birth of the occidental dance-art. Here began the art of dancing solely for the delight and instruction of the spectator. When the entire community had taken part in the dance, the relative performance of the dancers was regulated only by the talent God had given them. But with the development of a small group watched by the rest of the community and fomenting competition, the necessity for greater care and finer virtuosity became at once apparent. Thus began the study of stage technique of the dance which, under the affectionate cultivation of those unsurpassed experts in beauty, flowered rapidly to full-bloom. Soon the dance became, if not the greatest, at least the most generally cultivated of the arts. Every one danced—priests, poets, statesmen—for even as simpler minds had found it the easiest form of expression, so greater minds found it the subtlest form of expression.

From its pinnacle achieved under the Greeks, the dance-art was destined to be, with the other arts, slowly but surely degraded by the materialistic hand of Rome. Rome borrowed her art-forms from the Greeks. In the earlier years of her reign she lent a

warrior strength to her dance, thus preserving its simple dignity. Since a national art is born only through the public mentality, there is no surer way to trace the psychology of mankind than through its dancing—that art which, root and branch, grows closest to the human heart. Conquering Rome danced with strength—but then, growing soft with victories, materialistic with wealth, and vicious with idleness, her dance lost its old dignity. Its patrons demanded sensationalism, obscenity. These demands for bacchic orgies could be supplied only by loose women; and the patrons who found it fitting that they should bring a great art thus low, saw no inconsistency that they themselves refused to participate in this art which they had degraded. For this is the price of materialism—scorn for a beauty that scorn has wrecked. In the several centuries that the dance-art lodged in Rome it received a stigma from which it has long struggled to free itself. Only the paid woman danced; and “dancer” became a synonym for “harlot.”

When the great Ship of State of the Eternal City (Rome) sank at last under the black waters of ignorance, bestiality, and lust, it threatened to suck into the whirlpool of annihilation all the arts. The frail life-boat which saved them during the dark Middle Ages was the Christian Church. In this new environment the dance suffered a complete transformation. Moralities and mass “ballets” before the

altar were the guise under which it now appeared, though it was still called "dancing."<sup>2</sup>

There was only one dance which survived the Middle Ages without the aid of the church, and that was the Spanish. In Spain it has developed along lines entirely different from the rest of the continent. There it lies near to the hearts of the people. It is a respected and understood art, whose depth of colour shows plainly the enrichment of centuries of human interest. The rich choreography of Spain steadily developing during those years when the rest of the European dance sought sanctuary, in the shadow of the altar, is brilliant proof of the ends which might have been achieved by this same European dance had not mankind failed its first-born in the hour of need.

The germ of the Western ballet was the Roman pantomime; yet this took no root until 1489 when a great fête was held in honor of the Duke of Milan. So we see that in the very moment of its tragic death, the dance was being born again; and in the very scene of its Etruscan glory the same Tuscan race quickened it to new life. Italy, her soil rich with a dead Empire, her people's blood still pulsing

<sup>2</sup> The dance of the Seises in the Cathedral of Sevilla, dates from a time so remote that its origin is unknown. This dance was performed by boys before the altar during the Semana Santa (Holy Week) as late as the spring of 1931, though I have been unable to ascertain whether or not the new republic has done away with this ancient ritual. In a book written in 1682 Father Menestrier definitely attaches dancing to the ritual of the church.

to old rhythms, did not forget the dance in her great Renaissance of the arts. Masques, fêtes, and ballets became the vogue. No less an artist than Leonardo da Vinci lent his unsurpassed talent to the glorifying of the religious masques. Cardinal Riario wrote the first theatrical ballet, and Catherine de Medici took from Florence to Paris the passion for the new ballet.

After the many years in which prowess was the greatest of virtues, culture began again to lift its head. As is consistently true, the desire for culture which follows war showed itself first in lavishness. Elegance must be clothed in jewels and velvets—or it cannot be elegance! For the appreciation of beauty in simplicity comes only as the crowning glory of a culture long nursed. And as the years of war were long, so the growth through ostentation was long. In Spain, Austria, France, and Italy the first asset of the ballet was gorgeousness of costume. Dancers appeared in skirts and headdresses which defied all but the most stately movements. The world was self-conscious of its new glories, and it moved with mincing step, hiding its fright of the sudden light of returning art under a snobbish dignity.

"L'histoire de la danse est un peu l'histoire de l'humanité,"<sup>3</sup> says Charbonnel. What conclusions can we draw of race psychology from the ascent

<sup>3</sup> "The history of the dance is, to some extent, the history of humanity."



of the dance-art? Under the brilliant if showy patronage of the court of Louis XIV in Paris, the first National Academy of Music and Dance was founded (1661). Yet in the long list of creative and recreative geniuses of the dance that grace that institution's roster we find ninety per cent are foreign artists, and most of these Italians. Paris became the great art-market to which Italy, Austria, and Germany sent their artists. And this condition remained unchanged for four centuries. Only Spain remained aloof, finding her artists, training them, giving them a career, and finally, burying them, all within her own borders.

Under the Louises, royal and clerical patronage placed the dance on a high social level. Even the King of France danced in performances which were open to the public, and "the king can do no wrong!" Many writers have called this the Golden Age of Dancing, and, certainly, it emerged in glory, at least outwardly, from the chrysalis of the church. Yet an art can go no higher than its patrons and acolytes. True art, at this period, was stifled under pretentiousness. The dance was far from its original meaning, for it was used, not for emotional expression, but to "show off." Yet its upward climb was steady. Balarisini, called to Paris, introduced exactitude of group form (1581). Carmargo,<sup>4</sup> in-

<sup>4</sup> Although this dancer was called to Paris from Brussels, she was of Spanish parentage. This may explain her "invention" of the *entre chat*

troduced definition of technique, the heelless slipper, and the shorter skirt; Noverre, ballet-master of Stuttgart, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, introduced the action-ballet and abolished the mask and head-dress. It is interesting to note that, far from being educated up to these ideas, the public unconsciously forced them by their instant approval of the slightest sign of improvement.

In its rapid rise under the Louises, the dance underwent all the "growing pains" of sensationalism (the Ballets des Chevaux),<sup>5</sup> popularisation (Cari-gini's ballets which were grossly political satires), and social prestige ("elles" (les danseuses) "ne pouvaient se developper librement, et elles furent toujours gênées per l'affectation outrée, et le rigorisme intransigeant qui presidaient aux fêtes et aux bals de cette époque").<sup>6</sup>

Slowly the theatrical pomp of the ballet gave place to the subtle taste and delicacy of Louis XV. Majesty was displaced by grace, beauty by charm, and gravity by abandon. Nowhere better exemplified than in Watteau, the "scène champêtre," elegant ruralism, became the fashion. Human nature, tired of the insincerity of pompousness, was strug-

which step (called the "quarta") was used in the folk-dances of Spain for centuries before her birth (see glossary "entre-chat").

<sup>5</sup> Ballets performed on horseback.

<sup>6</sup> Charbonnel, "La Danse," *La Danse sous Louis XIV*, p. 194. "They (the dancers) were unable to develop freely (their art) being always restrained by the excessive affectation and the intransigent rigourism dominating the fêtes and balls of that epoch."

gling to return to natural ways. But the centre of the dancing world was Paris, and it was not in that gaily-superficial city that the depth of sincere simplicity could be found. Evil came hand in hand with good, for Carmargo, brilliant creator of technique, "danced to dance, not to stir emotion," and thus the dance-art began its long road away from its original function.

For technique, so necessary in the expression of any art, comes to the point of overdevelopment: being created for the betterment of expression, it overleaps itself and stifles expression to its own glorification. Yet this decadence did not reach its climax until after the advent of Taglioni, and even then it was not super-technique alone that was the entire cause of the decay of the dance-art, but an older evil lying, since the days of Rome, at the roots of dancing.

In 1681 the first women dancers appeared at the Opera, and swiftly on their tripping heels came the old canker of Rome! In a very few years the moral "easiness" of these artists was so much a matter of course that when Lulli, composer and director, saw the ladies of the National Academy only as instruments to express his artistic creations, his case was so unique that an astonished chronicler writes of him, "*Il n'avait jamais de maitresse parmi les femmes de l'Opera. Non seulement, il ne de-*



mandait rien ni aux chanteuses, ni aux danseuses.”<sup>7</sup> Now for the advancement of an art, the audience—public opinion—must be in all things agreed with the artist. Certain it is that in the time of the Louises the code of morals was a different one, and a Paris which, in 1726, was scandalised by Carmargo’s short skirts, found little shocking in royal mandates which excluded decent conduct among the Opera dancers. (“Les seigneurs de la Cour exerçaient alors un pouvoir despotique et suprême sur les nymphes de l’Opéra. Voulai-ent-elles montrer de la réserve, de la régularité dans leur conduite, un ordre du roi s’y opposait.”)<sup>8</sup> But the disease grew worse while society grew better. In 1744 the “marcheuses” were introduced into the Opera.

Called by a contemporary writer “an ingenious industry,” this was nothing more nor less than women who, wanting to show themselves for sale, paid a percentage of their earnings to the Director of the Opera! So the oldest profession entered the new Temple of the Dance and branded anew the name of danseuse with looseness. It soon became only too accepted that the coryphées were the

<sup>7</sup> Fremeuse de la Vieuville, “La Danse,” Charbonnel, p. 184. “He never had a mistress among the women of the Opera. Not only that, but he never demanded a favour from either the singers or the dancers.”

<sup>8</sup> Charbonnel, “La Danse,” sous Louis XV, p. 203. “At that time the gentlemen of the Court exercised a command, absolute and despotic over the ‘nymphs’ of the Opera. Did they wish to show a reserve, a regularity in their conduct . . . an order of the king opposed it!”

mistresses of the abonnés.<sup>9</sup> "Toutes ont quelqu'un naturellement," writes Vieil Abonné, "d'aucunes ont même quelques uns."<sup>10</sup> Society came to consider the dancer less and less as an artist, and with this opinion came, naturally, a belief that after all, the dance was not an art but a profession only a little more showy than that of the "marcheuse."

At the same time technique was attaining dangerous heights among the dancers. With Taglioni the dance-art reached its second apex. This artist, a perfect exponent of technique to which she added immeasurably, used that technique as a vehicle for expression. But she set such a standard that, being misunderstood, it was impossible to follow. Trying to emulate her steps, they overlooked her spirit, and the ballet lapsed into a decadence of mindless bodies on overdeveloped legs. The "petites filles-singes"<sup>11</sup> had, in their search for perfection of step, little time to develop their souls. To quote again Charbonnel, "On reproche après cela aux danseuses de manquer de verve de n'avoir pas d'esprit, que sais-je? En auraient-elles la force en se soumettant à ce régime d'entraînement qui les absorbe, qui les occupe? La plus belle intelligence ne résiste pas à deux années de cabriolet. La danseuse sait lire écrire et compter sur ses doigts. A la rigueur elle

<sup>9</sup> Financial supporters of the institution and holders of season tickets.

<sup>10</sup> All of them (the abonnés) have some one, naturally some even keeping several (mistresses).

<sup>11</sup> Little Monkey-girls.

eut pu se passer de l'écriture. L'écriture c'est du luxe." <sup>12</sup>

And so the art declined with the artist who soon became considered both ignorant and loose. The art of the dancer on the stage was unsatisfying; the life of the dancer off the stage was shocking. Society withdrew its approval from artist and art.

Recoiling from the easy morals of the past decade, public mentality soon reached the other extreme. Community amusements of all kinds were loudly condemned by an ardent clergy. Naturally the first institution to fall under this ban was the theatre. As soon as society, accepting this new vogue of prudishness, withdrew its patronage, the theatre had perforce to change its material to befit its new clientele. For that which is forbidden suddenly becomes desirable. Naughtiness, in one class, became delightfully interesting, and licentiousness, in another, became, by emulation, chic. The new code condemned feminine legs as an abomination; ergo, the stage was showing quantities of shapely and uneducated legs. Sensationalism and obscenity began to show themselves, and the quality of the public had so changed that these mountebanks were hailed

<sup>12</sup> Charbonnel, "La Danse," *Danses Modernes*, p. 275. "And for all that one reproaches the danseuses for lacking verve and spirit! How can they have the strength after their submission to such a régime of training which absorbs them completely? The finest intelligence cannot resist two years of constant 'cabriolet.' The danseuse knows how to read, and write, and count on her fingers—and she could even dispense with writing, for writing is a luxury!"

with enthusiasm. The folk-dances of Spain and the Orient were announced by shrewd managers as the "newest" in vulgarity and lewdness. It was, in short, an era of bad taste, and immoral morality. Ladies, living like hot-house flowers, seemed to find a secret joy in dwelling upon the "looseness" of others. The world, always "its brother's keeper," was never so much concerned with its neighbour's business. Parlor conversation and table-talk consisted of gossip, for art and literature, the only existing brain-foods, had been called "immoral."

As for dancing the title was erroneously applied to the can-can, the cake-walk, contortionism, and the weak stepping of hour-glass chorus-girls. So rapid and complete had been the decline of the dance-art that the public, always of short memory, forgot it had ever existed.

But the second Renaissance was destined to be as rapid as the decadence had been. Born of a natural disgust of the insincere prudishness of society and a reaction against the super-form of overdeveloped ballet, there sprang up here and there free souls who proclaimed again the art of dancing, and, searching for its reality, went back to its beginnings for expression. In the simplicity of the Greek and the profundity of the Oriental, these artists found their answer. At first the public, claiming to be inexpressibly shocked by the sight of nude toes, rushed to see what manner of creatures they



were who dared to display themselves publicly sans stockings and stays. But those who came to scoff remained to pray. They experienced the very human satisfaction of feeling that they, too, could express their emotions through this natural, untrammelled movement. They were delighted to find they could appreciate and feel this beauty. They said they understood it, and, understanding, proclaimed it art!

"Dancing," says Rahel Varnhagen, "is the only art of which we ourselves are the stuff." This was the salvation of the dance-art; this truth that the watcher is part and parcel of the dancer; that he, too, feels those nebulous emotions that envelop the artist and, moving in an aura of beauty and light, expresses them, trance-like, through motional reality.

Like two living wires that touch in the dark, the recreated art of creative Greek dancing touched the established art of recreative ballet dancing, and the spark therefrom lit the world. Russian dancers to whom years of training had given a technique so controlled as to be second nature, suddenly saw the immeasurable value of emotional expression. For fifty years the decadence had lasted; and ten years after the first public appearance of Isadora Duncan, Dhiégliév had brought his company into the capitals of Europe and quickened to a brilliant life the art of the dance. The return to popu-

larity was sudden and absolute. Where before a liking for the dance had been considered a depravity it suddenly became lauded as advanced intellectuality. "After all," said the world, "the Dance is an Art!"

Since 1918 the dance-art has made almost unbelievable strides upward. To-day it bids fair to become again the most popular of the arts. Which is as it should be, for "dancing is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is no more translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself!"<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Havelock Ellis, "The Dance of Life," *The Art of Dancing*.

Permission to re-print certain parts of this chapter has been courteously granted by *Home and Abroad*, in which publication appeared an article by me entitled "Development of the Occidental Dance-art." La Meri.



## IV

### THE BALLET DANCE

FOR the utterly ignorant the first question would be, "What is ballet-dancing?" In dictionary style I might reply, "Ballet-dancing is that type, or school, of dancing which teaches, by means of fixed rules, an established technique of dancing whose main scope is to create, through the countless combinations of line, step, and posture, admitted in this technique, an abstract beauty." But that answer, like most answers in the dictionary, would hardly catch the vital spirit, the fundamental principle of the ballet, and wherein it differs from other schools. For every type of dancing has a technique of one kind or another more or less established: every school admits in principle only its own technique: every school seeks to portray abstract beauty as it sees beauty. But "technique" and "beauty" are abstract words; the one must be fully explained to be understood, the other must be fully understood to be explained. Let us take the last first, for really nobody concerns himself much with the "whys" and "wherefores" of technique, but it is the opinion

of ideal beauty which has caused the artistic brawls of all time. Let us pass, then, to the theory of beauty as it is understood by the principles of the ballet.

Ballet is beauty clothed in form. It aims to exalt, not excite. Beauty without form ceases to be beauty. Re-born in that "rococo" age when society suppressed all emotion to the exigencies of form, the ballet, though it has developed and considerably freed its technique, has never changed its original ideal of the synonymy of "beauty" and "form." The ballet is an outgrowth, a stylisation to elegance, of the folk-dance. Dances which were the simple joy of the peasants found their way into the salon. Kings danced the "contredanses,"<sup>1</sup> imbuing them with an elegance and finish they had hitherto lacked. And from these court-dances developed, under royal patronage, the ballet. The earlier balletti were entirely performed by ladies and gentlemen of the Court. When he founded the National Academy, King Louis XIV wrote thus: "Many ignorant people have tried to disfigure the dance, the majority being people of quality, so that we have few among those of our Court and Suite who would be able to take part in our balletti." This observation of the King gave birth to the Academy, and the professional ballet-dancer. Yet, though the per-

<sup>1</sup> In his book, "The Dance," Cecil Sharpe treats fully this French adaptation of the English words "Country Dance."

former had changed, the performance remained the same, and the mark of "this delicate, vicious, and peculiarly artificial period" was indelibly placed on the ballet. It was not until as late as 1832, that the adoption of the short skirt and the maillot made possible the intricacies of technique which are now an integral part of this school. Early in the nineteenth century the centre of dancing passed from Paris to Milan, and the Scala, under Blasis, was the leader of the new movement in costume and technique. Developing longer than any other Occidental dance-art, the ballet is, undoubtedly, the most finished of our schools. In its development it has preserved only that which contributes to the moving design of the architectural form, casting away all that does not so contribute, no matter how dramatically expressive it may be. "La beauté d'une danse, l'émotion même qu'elle dégage naissent du jeu des lignes et des volumes, et de la qualité intrinsèque de ces volumes, de ses données plastiques. Le jeu lui même obéit à un certain nombre de conventions et d'artifices générateurs de beauté."<sup>2</sup> Expression is not necessary to beauty, for beauty here is a purely optical one, and not of the emotions; a beauty which appeals directly to the intellect through the eye. It is not a beauty to be

<sup>2</sup> Sordet, Dominique, "Eloge de la Danse Classique," an article appearing in *Figaro*, Nov. 1930. "The beauty of a dance, even the emotion which it inspires, is born in the play of lines and volumes, and in the intrinsic quality of these volumes and their plastic value. This same play observes a certain number of conventions and artifices, generators of beauty."

enjoyed so much as one to be appreciated. This appreciation must be built on knowledge or it cannot exist. To fully appreciate ballet, a certain knowledge of its intricate technique is necessary. One must know the basic steps and the ultimate ideal of their performance, or their complete perfection cannot be seen. To entirely appreciate a symphony orchestra some understanding of harmony, theory, and the technique of the various instruments is necessary. Hardly any better comparison can be found for the ballet than that of the symphony orchestra. The cappel-maestro, in the person of the choreographer, has at his disposal the required number of instruments which are the dancers, who are trained to movements of grace and of varying degrees of skill, even as the musicians of an orchestra. The book of the ballet is definitely written, as is the score of the symphony; to the choreographer is left the freedom of obtaining effects with this book and the instruments at his hand. The ultimate success of the number goes to the cappel-maestro, and to the choreographer. Neither the musician nor the ballet-dancer is considered as human beings. Their praise is for execution, not for creation. The ballet is the carefully-constructed composition of one man. Creative inspiration is neither expected nor desired of the performer. Enough that their bodies respond to the demands made upon them by the



choreographer. And even a cursory examination of the required technique will be amply convincing that these demands are extraordinarily difficult of attainment.

Ballet is and has always been the height of stylisation. The complaint that it is unnatural becomes a compliment, for it at no time strives to be natural. The subject-matter, the technique, the costumes, the very bodies of its performers, are highly stylised to express fantasy of thought in orchestral expression. The realm of their subjects is the lyric land of imagination. The technique is designed to flee to the ground, to defy gravity. The arabesque, the flying-leap, the position on toe, the spinning pirouette, can you see them and imagine that there could be any intent behind to appear natural? These things were designed for creatures with wings! And so perfect is this idea of stylisation that, masterfully executed, it gives indeed the desired impression. Who, having once seen, can ever forget Nijinsky, the "Specter of the Rose," flying softly, in a great leap, through the moonlit window? In representing an Oriental ballet it is not the desire of the choreographer to reproduce orientalism in exactitude, nor even, I believe, in atmosphere; but rather to produce the picture that is conjured to the western mind by the word "oriental," a sort of Arabian-Nights dream of fairy perfection. If you do not like this disregard of

reality then you have every right to say so. But do not cry aloud that the ballet does not know that Arabs are not toe-dancers! Neither do "toreros"<sup>3</sup> handle their "capas"<sup>4</sup> like the baritone in "Carmen," yet the majority of persons find their enjoyment of the stirring aria no whit lessened because the singer waves his cape like an old woman shooing chickens. He is there to sing, not to demonstrate "veronicas."<sup>5</sup> By the same token the ballet-dancer is there to dance, not to take you on a travel-tour through Arabia. What opera is to singing, ballet is to dancing. Both tell a highly fanciful tale written to present an æsthetic ensemble of stylised, conventionalised beauty, and whose performers strive to gain the admiration of the audience through the showing of adequate, or super-adequate technique; not desiring this admiration for the individual as personality (for the dancers are changing units in a living fresco, they are not people), but for the achievement. Not "the dancer is marvellous!" but "the dance is marvellous!" Interdependence of one movement on another, of one figure on another, of one effect on another, is a basic principle upon which the form of ballet rests. It is a school that has need of setting, costumes, orchestra, group, and soloists. Without these the breath of life dies from it. It is not an art to be presented coldly. It has need

<sup>3</sup> Bull-fighters.

<sup>4</sup> Bull-fighter's cape.

<sup>5</sup> One of the most beautiful of the torero's movements with the cape.



of both convention and artifice to realise the romantic beauty which is its goal. It is not a spontaneous "vers libre" crying out a psychologic impression uncramped by the preparation of study, but a romantic poem of a Shelley, of a Browning, a poem written by one who has vocabulary, who knows the cold framework of sentence-construction, who writes, not in emotion, but in the memory of emotion, and who is not afraid to "prune" his work before he sends it forth. This is the ballet. The steps are the words, the "enchainments" the phrases, the dance is the poem built on the framework of introduction, development, climax, and dénouement, just as a literary work is built; and all handled with complete restraint and an observance of all rules. The ballet finds attainment in knowledge, declaring feeling alone inadequate, and their knowledge is attained by obedience, not thought. "Realism is a fallacy. Wherever we have returned to Nature our work has become without interest."<sup>6</sup>

And what of the technique which is the essence of the form which is the ballet? Of the Western schools there is no other which is so difficult of physical attainment. The course which Blasis established, and which was speedily accepted throughout the continent, consisted of one year on probation, and eight years of four hours a day. Those artists

<sup>6</sup> Oscar Wilde.

whose names are known all over the world—and many who will live and die unknown—have spent from ten to twenty years three to four hours a day working on the muscular training and brilliant “pas” of their dance. It is a school that may be gone into neither late nor lightly. Yet it is a school that is not impossible of attainment for any healthy body which starts the work before the tendons and muscles have lost the pliability and elasticity of childhood. A full appreciation of the extraordinary muscular demands made upon the body is impossible without personally studying in the school. Nothing is admitted as beyond the compass of the limbs, and the stretching of the body to attain wider sweep of line, quicker movement, and higher elevation, never ceases. Every step, every gesture, every pose has its name, and every ballet dancer knows them. Nothing so practical for the transmission of choreography has yet been found, though hundreds have worked to discover a dance-script. Positions of the feet are numbered; positions of the arms are numbered; every basic step is named, and many combinations of steps have convenient names. All these terms are in French, since the ballet-form was born in that nation, this, too, simplifies international study. To the entirely uninitiated this learning of countless names seems appalling. Unfortunately the names become familiar long before the steps are learned. In no other

school does the beginner study so long before giving an adequate performance. In no other school does the artist so rarely make his personality felt above the exigencies of his art. As in all art forms, the very virtues of the ballet are its vices. This architectural form, this geometrical technique, is designed to show a nearly acrobatic buoyancy of the human body. The ninety-degree angle of the feet is adopted because it provides the dancer with a wide base-line, which gives great stability in poses and quick rebound from the leaps. The "flying" ideal is so little suited to certain types of bodies, that, at one time, the "standardisation" of movement came near to turning "an agreeable amusement—into a debasing trade."<sup>7</sup> The folly to which narrowness of form may lead is perfectly expressed in the art of Dégas; and in none of his works more conclusively than the pastel of the two danseuses, one slim and red-haired, the other stocky and brunette, with every muscle straining to attain absolute identity, yet each subtly demonstrating the complete difference of body which God gave them. Again, although few other schools have such an infinite variety of steps at their command, this training each performer to the ultimately identical perfection often produces an effect of sameness which wearies the unthinking watcher. All hands are carried thus; all legs are lifted this way, and no other; the layman

<sup>7</sup> Noverre.

feels he has seen it all before. Very likely he has, for the aim of the ballet is not to be different, but to be better. The dancer does not invent, he improves. Or, to be more exact, his teacher improves, for the most divine of ballet-dancers does not create her own dances, but only executes those given her by her ballet-master. Anna Pavlowa,<sup>8</sup> who realised more perfectly than any other danseuse the ideals of the ballet, seldom created her own routines. Her world-famed "Le Cygne" is a dance-composition of M. Fokine, originally performed by Mme. Fokine, his wife. This is not to be condemned, since it is not a part of the ideals of the school that the dancer should be also a composer. Be sure that her time is amply taken up with attaining the technical heights necessary for the performance of the enchainments given her! The art of the artist is to make the technique look easy, not for it to be easy.

Physiologically based on the articulations, the exercises work first the ankle, then the knee, then the hip; each of these front, side, and back, in straight lines and circles. Arms are carried according to specified form, each leg-position having its corresponding arm-position. But the arms are not accentuated in the daily exercises. That is to say, ninety-five per cent of the time is given to the

<sup>8</sup> The perfection of Mme. Pavlowa's art was due to the exceedingly rare combination of her "ethereal volatility" and her "dramatic gifts" which "were so prodigious that none could see her without being stricken with wonder." V. Svetloff, "Anna Pavlowa."



training of the legs. This consideration alone would make it eminently Western, for every folk-dance of the Occident is of the legs and feet. For the effect of flying, straight knees and rigidly-pointed toes are insisted upon in the air-work: the leg in the air is always controlled, taut. The soft-kneed descent is not less important. Also in the postures and on the toe the supporting knee is super-straight, a detail of perfection rarely seen in the average toe-dancer. The position "sur la pointe" is the highest virtuosity yet achieved by the ballet. Although the term was used in reference to Carmargo's technique, it was at that time signifying a position on the half-toe, or ball of the foot. According to all available data, the position on the extreme point of the foot, as we know it to-day, was first employed by Taglione in 1830. Rising on the toes is not a physical torture, as many laymen believe, though, after long hours of practice, toes occasionally bleed. It is without doubt one of the most difficult techniques to acquire, and must be long practised with much care, lest the joints of the toes become enlarged or dislocated. Naturally the toe-dancer wears a hard-toed supporting slipper. A moment's consideration and a grain of common-sense will tell you that the two historical exceptions to this rule were freaks of nature, for the bones of the human foot were not made to perpendicularly support the weight of even the lightest of bodies for the three



to ten minutes of a single number. All toe-dancers wear them—yes, even the divine Pavlowa! The slippers are not designed to make the technique easy, which is a consummation never yet sought by the creators of the ballet, but to make possible an otherwise impossible technique.

If you have not seen the manifestations of the Ballet Russe under Diaghilev, or Madame Pavlowa's earlier companies, you cannot fully judge the ballet. So far as I have been able to ascertain, no other performances of this art have entirely embodied that "ideal of abstract beauty clothed in form." We have need to remember that gone forever is the danseuse who "with her features cast in this unchangeable and fixed expression, answers the demand for change and motion by her lower limbs alone; all her artistic capability having sunk down from her vertex through her body to her feet. Head, neck, trunk, and thighs are only present as unbidden guests, whereas her feet have undertaken to show alone what she can do!"<sup>9</sup> The "petites-filles-singes" of Degas are not the modern ballet, and who attacks the ballet to-day because of them, is unjust. If these "petites-filles-singes" went from Paris to Milan with Blasis, they stayed behind when Cecchetti went to St. Petersburg, automatically moving with him to the Russian capital the centre of the ballet dance. So the French-Italian technique,

<sup>9</sup> Richard Wagner, Cecil Sharpe's "The Dance," p. 48.

unchanged, but revitalised by the incomparable Slavic temperament, absorbed the inspiration of expressionism from the then-new Classic school of the United States, as represented by Duncan, Allan and St. Denis. This is the ballet as we see it to-day, "an eclectic blending of the two revived forms—the Romantic from Russia, and the Classic from America."<sup>10</sup> In summing up the principles upon which he founded the Romantic Revolution, Fokine declared the following rules for the new ballet:

"The new ballet rejects the conventions of the older ballet—of dancing with the feet turned out, dressed in short bodices, with the figure tightly laced in stays and with a strictly established system of steps, gestures, and attitudes. Not to form combination of ready-made and established dance steps but to create in each case a new form corresponding to the subject—that is the first rule of the new ballet. The second rule is that dancing and mimetic gesture have no meaning in a ballet unless they serve as an expression of dramatic action. The third rule is that the new ballet admits the use of conventional gesture only when it is required by the style of the ballet. The fourth rule is the expressiveness of groups and ensemble dancing (not as in the old ballet, for ornament alone). The fifth rule is the alliance of dancing with the other arts, recognising the alliance of the arts (music and

<sup>10</sup> Havelock Ellis, "The Dance of Life," *The Art of Dancing*.

scenic decoration) only on the condition of complete equality, and allowing perfect freedom to the scenic artist and musician (thus doing away with the necessity for the 'tutu' and the conventional ballet-music)."

"La danseuse classique capte le tumulte intérieur et l'imprisonne dans une forme. Superflu, enfin, le souci d'être vraie!"<sup>11</sup> The ballet is a fairy-tale, and some there are who find a philosophy behind the tale, and imagination to dream that the toe-dancer really flies. These are the rare, the thrice-blessed. "When I was young," says a French writer, "I thought all dancers had three legs at least! Three legs and a 'tutu'"! It is an expressive impression of the ballet on the young mind. But I know of a better! It is the little girl who said, "I saw a fairy once. Her name was Anna Pavlowa!"

<sup>11</sup> Sordet, Dominique, "Eloge de la Dance Classique," an article appearing in *Figaro*, Nov., 1930. "The classic dancer captures the emotional tumult and imprisons it in form. Superfluous, then, the necessity of reality."

## V

### THE FREE DANCE

THE term "Free Dancing" has been adopted by me from a book <sup>1</sup> of that title by Elizabeth Selden. Under it I place all those types of dancing which are free of the traditions of technique or procedure. There is the Greek Dance, the Interpretative Dance, the Natural Dance, the New Dance, the Modernistic Dance, the Mechanistic Dance, the Expression Dance, the Expressionistic Dance, the Æsthetic Dance, the Visualisation of Music, the Absolute Dance, and, very likely, a host of others of which I have not heard. Each of these titles is created by the teacher, or leader, and adopted by his followers, but when analysed they all have certain points in common: freedom from tradition and procedure; freedom of technical expression; mental culture predominating physical culture; sincerity in source of inspiration and mode of expression; personal creation based on inspirational thought; and a loftier scope than the offering of simple amusement.

<sup>1</sup> "Elements of The Free Dance," by Elizabeth Selden, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1930.



Most of the Free schools, at least those which stand the test of time, were born in this way: one day there appears from somewhere a dancer with the courage of individuality, and the vision of creation. From the depths of her own soul she brings up the expression of rhythmic emotion; if the personality is strong and the moment is right, she has followers whose admiration bring them to make of her freedom a tradition which they copy and follow. Or, very rarely, the artist possesses the quality of genius which, instead of inspiring copyists, inspires inspiration! This is the true goal of the Free Dance—"do not dance as *I* dance, but only take my hand that I may lead you to the rich depths of your own soul."

These great leaders first of all free themselves of the popular tradition of beauty and artistry. They study the standards of the past, or gaze into the standards of the future to find a different ideal, and, finding it, they try to teach the public that beauty, as their fathers saw it, is not necessarily the beauty for which there is no repeal. Theirs is a pioneer spirit, the essence of which lays undisputed claim of right to the title of Free dancers.

This desire for freedom from tradition attacks, first of all, the traditional forms of technique. A line declared beautiful for one body is not necessarily beautiful for a body of entirely different proportions. Indeed, uniformity itself is a menace to true



beauty. This, the Free Dance, has seen and adopts as a code, knowing that each body must find its own means of expression and that the muscles that are forced far beyond their natural capacity will find no æsthetic balance in the rest of the anatomy. So the practical expression of the Free dancer is founded, not on technique, but on rhythm; some using musical rhythm, some dynamic, some emotional, and all the others infinite shadings of these three. The test of rhythm is not to be applied in the sense of "keeping time," since that is hardly applicable even to the term "musical rhythm" in the strictest sense. It may be a rhythm founded on breathing, which creates life. This basis produces a composition of more flow of movement than is possible in the dance which is created on mechanical design; for the course of a Free composition is rather an evolution than a construction. It is not a putting together of known and practised steps, but a following of rhythmic emotion as expressed through the individual body. For this reason the Free dancer concentrates not on the body, but on the inner thought, the actuating motive of the dance. He dances within as well as without, his gestures are significant without being literal, there is no "padding" in his work, for the movement is always subservient to the idea. This principle of freedom of technical expression has its advantages and disadvantages. It is immeasurably fine to make

the joy of dancing possible to all those who are the possessors of two arms and two legs; yet, by inverse reasoning, it makes the perfection of the rare individual artist seldom understood and little appreciated, since it gives the public no definite standard by which to judge. Lacking this definite standard of judgment to which it has become accustomed, the public comes to the conclusion that the endless differences of technical approach within the Free schools are no more than half-baked experimentations. Thus the school loses much artistic power, and is torn by violent disagreements within its own camp. Yet the individuality of performers is the very essence of the spirit, since the unification of technique and ideals which would indeed bring power would at the same time establish tradition; and the dance, exchanging an old master for a new one, would be no more free! No, Free dancing is the surprise package of the arts; you pull forth a package and, sometimes, even opening it doesn't tell you what you have. But that's half the joy of it! Let it remain as it is. Some day the mystified public will develop an understanding and will be able to rely on its intuition to discover the cause and effect of a dance without being forced to scan these and worthier pages to know the value of an artist and an art.

It has been said that the Free dancing must, first of all, have an idea; that "thought is a rein which

he (the Free dancer) cannot let go of for an instant." <sup>2</sup> Bodily movement is not in itself sufficient. It is the mental or emotional rhythm as it moves the body which is of worth. The dancer, according to his or her inspiration, may interpret a mental or spiritual crux, an abstract mood, or the movement the musical composer feels in the structure of the notes, but in every case the mind and soul of the performer is entirely within the composition. The training of the Free dancer, then, is one of the mind as well as of the body. The development of the individuality and personal culture of the performer is infinitely more valuable than the physical development. For the body is considered of insufficient interest in itself, but must be mastered as a violinist masters his violin, so that it may become a pliable vehicle for emotional or psychological exposition. "Transform the body into an instrument which can be played upon by inner command or outer design." <sup>3</sup> But the mastering of the instrument is not enough, for the inner command must be sure and clean. So, hand in hand with the physical development, goes an endless culture of the mind, and development of the soul. There is necessary the intimate knowledge of music, of all other arts, of philosophy and psychology; and above all, knowledge of one's self and one's body

<sup>2</sup> Selden, Elizabeth, "Elements of the Free Dance," *The Inner Necessity*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Wigman, Mary, statement on her theory.

instrument. The moving impetus of the dance, the "idea," is as insufficient in itself as a seed in a bright envelope. It cannot flower until it is planted in a rich depth of mentality, watered with the sweat of long hours of work, nourished by the sun of learning, and even then, only time and the elements of chance can decide its destiny.

As sincerity is necessary in any art, it is ten-fold more necessary in the art of the Free Dance, which is guided to perfect culmination only through that: sincerity in the source of inspiration and in the mode of expression. Beware of the charlatan who, seeking to shine in the reflected glory of the great, imitates them in mode of expression: or of him who seeks to sell you the stone of affected obtuseness for the bread of an inspiration beyond your grasp. The words of Petronius, "To thine own self be true," must be the Golden Rule of the free dancer. He who disregards his conviction in admiration of the fashions of art, or in fear of the snickers of the ignorant, is no more Free. So deep is this belief in the power of sincerity that Isadora Duncan advises the dancer to rely "on sureness of instinct without need of consideration." The theory is weak only in its belief in human possibilities, for it can be applied only to the mind guided by culture or inspired by genius. For since the crux of the complete consummation of the Free Dance rests on personal creation based on inspirational thought, it



follows that only a mind capable of nourishing a great thought can ever present a dance at once arresting and satisfying. Reflection of a master's ideas and "routines" bring to the performance of the Free Dance a coldness under which it labors its way to oblivion. I have seen the concert of an excellent performer beautifully presented and costumed with rare taste, but in the lobby afterwards the public spoke of the dancer's coldness, of her lack of experience, of a number of other vague things. Her art had failed entirely to grip, and to those who were "au courant" of movements in the dance world the reason was only too apparent; each of her dances bore the unmistakable imprint of the "routining" of a different master, and so well had the lessons been learned that the very mannerisms of the masters had been copied together with the steps. This is to flout the very first principle of the Free Dance, which is creation, not re-creation. The movements of the body must either be learned accurately following tradition (in which case it is a dance not to be included under the Free Dance, but under the school which has supplied the tradition) or the movements of the body must come from that same body as dictated by the inspiration within. Movements of another's inspiration will never be the vehicle of emotional vitality. "How can a man hope to be a creator if he insists on



being an actor?"<sup>4</sup> It is the soul which speaks in the Free Dance, not the body.

As the ballet is the dance-counterpart of the opera, so is the Free Dance of the concert. "Some people," says John Martin in the *New York Times*, "feel it incumbent upon them to go to symphony concerts and other 'good' music ever so often for the benefit of their souls, and they go frankly expecting to be bored in the interest of culture." The concert, the recital, is a didactic form of art, and, as a didactic art, the Free Dance is not so much a feast for eye and ear as a nourishment for brain and soul. It does not seek to amuse you, but to move you, to take you out of yourself and the tired world you live in. What does it matter if you come away gasping in admiration or raging in disgust? If it has moved you it has succeeded. Its didacticism is not of logic, but of emotion. It is not expected that at first sight the watcher understands it to the point of stating the pantomimic meaning of every movement; for it is a psychological art, and as such it is not grasped in the first lesson nor yet the tenth. It is a science, not an amusement, and conviction will come to the watcher only after long hours of absorption and consideration. Understanding in the commoner sense he may never gain, but an emotional impact is there for him if artist and art are sincere. You may be one of the moderns

<sup>4</sup> Dimnet, Ernest.

who find the joy of seeing newness overleap all else, or you may be of the more conservative to whom understanding is necessary to enjoyment. Yet the Free dancer does not request nor desire you to "like" his art. What he desires is to play upon your emotions, even those obscure emotions which you yourself cannot define. He wants to make you feel an intensity, a vitality, an emotional pitch, a rhythm felt or acted, and above all, the sense of thought, weighed, believed and translated into movement.

Definitions of the principles of the Free Dance are, of necessity, vague because the art itself is undefined. Each artist seeks and creates within himself through an exteriorisation of rhythmic movement of his own feeling. It is not the presentation of the inspiration which must be examined, but the inspiration itself, for a message worth while can only spring from intelligence, thought, study, and culture in the individual. If the source of inspiration is sound and the mode of expression sincere, then it has the right to be considered a work of art in accordance with its own principles. "Creative joy, rhythmic sensibility, and technical fitness,"<sup>5</sup> these three are the elements of the Free Dance, these three, guided by sincerity and tempered by humility. For without humility the simpleton, seeking his own soul, plumbs the depths of his self-esteem

<sup>5</sup> Selden, Elizabeth, "Elements of the Free Dance."

to shower upon a puzzled world the effusions of his callow mentality. These so-called dancers travelling under the open standard of "Free" confuse the public and clutter up the stages, and are the worst enemies of the art they believe to practise. Sometimes one becomes painfully aware that there are too many blank numbers in the lottery of surprise packages!

DUNCAN and ALLAN.—In the earlier years of this century there came out of California two of the first disciples of the Free Dance, Isadora Duncan and Maud Allan. Both these young women offered a courageous defiance to the modes and manners of that day, and, flinging away shoes and stays, danced with their bodies as God made them. No age could have offered less inspiration or encouragement to the Free Dance, and these pioneers shook the world so thoroughly as to create changes in everything, from the arts to women's styles. To-day we have become so accustomed to the Greek type these dancers re-begun, that we often call it "classical dancing" and feel we have grown far beyond it (as though we could ever grow beyond the need for sheer beauty!). Duncan herself called it the "new dance," a title which obviously had to be changed. Yet at the time it was indeed new! New and shocking! Could our mothers believe that their children would dance with clean hearts and naked bodies?

So the first Free Dance within our knowledge was one which, in open opposition to the ballet of that time, set its ideal to follow the easy curve of everything in nature, of which the body is the most beautiful. Its technique was the pure grace of the unforced movement expressing the emotion which springs from the inner soul. It was, in short, a return to the type of expression used for the dance in the epoch when that art was at the most respected moment of its history. Followers of these artists have called it Greek dancing, and Neo-Greek. Few (and those few, notable) have caught the essence of the first inspiration—that the model of any motion must be adapted to the body making it; a given movement does not look equally well performed by contrasting types of figures. Theirs was the first essence of the Free Dance—"Do not dance as I dance, but plumb the depths of your own soul!" The poetic Isadora says to seek "the central spring of all movement, the crater of motor power, the unity from which all divisions of movement are born,—concentrate all force to this centre, and the rays and vibrations of the music stream to this one fount of light within." More direct, Maud Allan says, "He who creates is an artist; he who learns from another, an artisan." These have pointed freedom as the essence of expression in the dance. These pioneers danced "natural qualities by means of nat-



ural movements.”<sup>6</sup> “These flowers before me,” writes Duncan, “contain the dream of a dance; it could be named ‘the light falling on white flowers.’ A dance that would be a subtle translation of the light and the whiteness—so pure, so strong that people would say ‘it is a soul we see moving, a soul that had reached the light and found the whiteness. We are glad it should move so,’—it is a prayer, this dance, each movement reaches in long undulations to the heavens and becomes a part of the eternal rhythm of the spheres.” Not very definite as a basis to begin study. And yet definite enough for the Free dancer; for Free dancing cannot be taught, it can only be inspired!

WIGMAN.—Duncan and Allan, first of the Free dancers, priestesses of beauty, must feel, in viewing Mary Wigman, much as the hen that hatched the duck, “Can this be my doing?” For the last pioneer, to date, of the Free Dance is as different from those first as they were from the ballet! Yet it is this very antithesis of performers that can best explain the principles of the Free Dance.

Mary Wigman coming into a world that for ten years had been screaming “Freedom!” through the cannon’s mouth, has risen to proclaim the ultimate freedom of the dance in freeing it from its nearest ally, music. You may or may not approve of the severance of the ancient alliance, since viewpoints

<sup>6</sup> The Kinneys, “The Dance,” *Romantic Revolution*, p. 243.



of alliances generally depend on personal politics; but that it is consistent with the ideal of freeing the dance from all tradition is undeniable.

Wigman interprets not music, but mood, and such sounds as accompany her work are an accompaniment to the mood rather than to the dance. This form of Free Dance, then, goes to the very root of the ideal which says that the idea, the inspiration, the thought, are the axial point of the whole matter. Wigman makes them the Alpha and Omega, and all else only serves to heighten these. She says, "—my purpose is not to interpret the emotions. Grief, joy, and fear are terms too static to describe the sources of my work. My dances flow rather from certain states of being, different stages of vitality which release in me a varying play of the emotions, and in themselves dictate the distinguishing atmospheres of the dances." She dances "Man (not the individual, but the race) and his fate from the harshest realism to the most sublimated abstraction." It is as difficult of practical understanding by the layman as Duncan's "light falling on white flowers." Yet who can pin down to the printed word the source of man's inspiration?

Wigman has often been accused of primitiveness of step, yet by her own statement she dances the "fate of man," and it needs no historian to tell us that man's fate—birth and death—are as primitive as in the beginning of all things. Of course one

doesn't exactly understand it. Does one understand birth and death? You may understand it or not, like it or not, but that her iconoclasm never leaves you indifferent is proof of its greatness!

It has not been my intention to neglect the dozens of excellent and generative artists who have found their medium of expression through the Free Dance. In speaking of Duncan, Allan, and Wigman I have only taken the first and most recent as examples of the wide field over which ranges the school of freedom. The watcher has little that is definite to guide him in his judgment, since "a first principle of æsthetic judgment declares that before one can criticise a work of art one must be sure that one understands the artist's intention."<sup>7</sup> Many dancers have realised this necessity of explanation for appreciation: for example, Palucca states clearly and concisely on her programme the intention of her art, which is pure music visualisation. Mme. Public argues that an artist who does not make her intention plain through her art is inadequate. With this I do not agree, for though I have little doubt of Dante Alighieri's "adequacy," yet I am unable to

<sup>7</sup> Seinfel, Ruth, in an article on Mary Wigman published in *The Dance* magazine.

To speak in detail of every exponent of the Free Dance to-day who deserves recognition is impossible here. Yet I cannot pass without mentioning the Sakharoffs (for their pioneering of this field in Europe), Georges Pomies (for his thoroughly Parisian work) and Palucca Georgi and Kreutzberg in Europe; and, in North America, Ruth St. Denis, Michio Ito, Martha Graham, Charles Weidman and Doris Humphrey for their enthusiasm for, and influence on, the American Free Dance.

appreciate him in original! If Mme. Public is unable to understand fully the underlying principles of the ballet with which she has grown up, how infinitely less can she appreciate an art the principles of which have been created and exclusively performed by the unique dancer whom she watches? There are no rules by which you can learn the good and the bad in Free dancing, for, like English grammar, every rule has twenty exceptions. You must only become so attuned to the dance itself that right and wrong are dictated by a sixth sense. Some seek naturalness, others newness; some seek beauty, others strength; some interpret spiritualism, others materialism; some seek a musical rhythm, others an emotional significance; yet they are all akin through the single aim to attain the free expression of individuality.

## VI

### THE ETHNOLOGIC DANCE

THE term "ethnologic dancing" includes all those types of dances which treat of races and peoples. It includes both Folk and National dancing, and reaches out to embrace all manifestations of racial choreography.

The study of Ethnologic dancing is limitless in interest. Not unlike the joy of the archæologist at the brink of a new excavation is that of the ethnologic choreographist discovering hitherto unknown traditions which open new vistas toward the origin of the dance-expression of a race. The folk, who know so well each tradition of step and costume, seldom have knowledge of whence these sprung. Priceless in interest are the facts and conjectures to be drawn by the student from these seemingly spontaneous dances of peoples. We can trace the origin of the race (the fact of the Spanish gitano's Moorish forebears plainly seen in their dances; or the conjecture in the striking similarity in the dances of Ireland, Brittany, and Galicia): the manner of life (as the Argentine gaucho<sup>1</sup> beating

<sup>1</sup> Cowboy.



the heavy boots and silver spurs of a horseman on the mud floor): the climate (as the contrast between the breath-taking ceiling-kicks of the Russian against the slow postures of the Moroccan): the character (the philosophic legend-laden dances of ancient China, or the voodoo dances of the negro, which latter were known to be practised in the United States as late as 1860): the religious origin (Holy Week Incas and Aztecs adore the Virgin and Child with the same barbaric steps and splendour which graced the festival-worship of Inti<sup>2</sup> or Tezcatlepoca<sup>3</sup>): the development of the civilisation (as the complicated dances of India, in technique and ideals growing for centuries, against the circle of rhythmically-padding feet of the American Indian). All these are riches given to the ethnologic student in the same abundance which the æsthete finds in a new beauty. But the uncultured layman is as blind to the profound knowledge of the ethnograph as he is to the divine inspiration of the æsthetic artist. This first and most sincere of all dance-expressions; this dance created by the folk to embody their highest sentiments, has, even more recently than the ballet and the Free Dance, begun to emerge from the shadows of public disinterest. Only twenty years ago Ruth St. Denis disproved magnificently the general opinion that oriental dances are lewd. Ten years ago the Spanish dance

<sup>2</sup> Sun-god of the Incas.

<sup>3</sup> God of War of Aztecs.



was considered a vulgar inhabitant of cheap cafés; to-day, thanks to Mme. Argentina,<sup>4</sup> it lifts its head as the great art it was born to be. There is something nearly uncanny in the persistence with which the public closes its door in the face of the joy of beauty, and the elevation of knowledge! Only pure ignorance can be indifferent to the ethnologic dance, for, being a dance based on the knowledge of traditions which limit the embroidery of free decorative steps, it is never seen in any form by the ethnograph that it does not show a new shading to start new conjecture. The ignorant, without the æsthetics to sense, without the knowledge to probe, has three vague excuses to cover the nakedness of his mind. The first is: "Folk dancing is so vapid and uninteresting. It isn't really artistic in a creative sense, you know." For this type we can do little save pray God to create him a soul and then save it!

The second is: "I don't care for folk dancing except in its original setting." Would you refuse a Millet in your house because you'd rather move to the country and look out the window? And if you looked out the window would you see what Millet saw? I think not, for God gives gods' eyes to some; and besides you must spend your life paying bills and getting the children through college, while Millet spent his life extracting the deepest richness from the full heart of Nature.

<sup>4</sup> Mme. Antonio Merce.

"I do not care," says one, "for the dances of Mme. Argentina. I prefer the *real* Spanish dancing." Yet this one has never been to Spain; and, should she go, would not have the perspicacity to see the living art under the sloe-eyed indifference of the dancing Gitanas. Let her thank God that Mme. Argentina, through knowledge and artistry, has brought the gipsy dance to her in a form she can digest! The Gitanas are an exception. By going to Andalusia one may, possibly, see them. But there are lands more difficult to reach than Spain. Will our philistine refuse to regard the Hindu dancer until she has the time (and money) to go to India? And, arriving there, will she draw her impression from the street dancers of Calcutta? It would be typical of the mentality! Furthermore the essence of the ethnographic dance is not a thing that can be seen; it must be studied, understood, and felt. Nothing grows so cold as the folk dance performed under the curious eyes of the antipathetic tourist! The artist must first make himself a friend of the folk, then they will dance—not for him, but forgetting him. The layman will never see the ethnologic dance unless he sees it through the eyes of an artist. Our philistine compared (Heaven forgive her!) Argentina to the strolling companies of cheap Spanish dancers in café and variety-show—and found their mentality nearer her own, doubtless!

Then there is the third excuse: "No artist can

interpret a racial expression save one of that same blood!" This is an imaginary barrier which leads to many amusing mistakes, often at the expense of so-called artistic sages. How many dithyrambs have been written on the "unmistakable temperament of the blood" by those who mistook the name for the fact—Roshanara <sup>5</sup> and Mata Hari, <sup>6</sup> for example. We cannot name the names of the living, yet I know a well-known Hindu dancer who is French, and a popular Spanish dancer who is American. Few of our third type enquire further than the sound of the name. Yet what does the name tell? The real artist is *without nationality*. The greatest German actor is an Italian; <sup>7</sup> the greatest interpreter of Albeniz, a Pole; <sup>8</sup> of Beethoven, an Italian; <sup>9</sup> of Bach, an Englishman. <sup>10</sup>

The foreign interpreter of the ethnologic dance must be equipped histrionically as well as technically. Do we deny the supremacy of Eleonora Duse enacting "Ghosts" because she wasn't born in Norway? Or Farrar the perfection of her Carmen because she isn't Spanish? Or Duncan her Greek dances because she was born in California?

Duncan reconstructed the dead art of an alien

<sup>5</sup> Roshanara was the daughter of English parents, but born in India. She was the first dancer to bring, with Ratan Devi, the Nautch to the Occident.

<sup>6</sup> Mata Hari was a Dutch woman who lived some years in Java, and there learned the dances which made her famed in Europe as a "genuine" Oriental dancer.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Moissi.

<sup>9</sup> Arturo Toscanini.

<sup>8</sup> Rubenstein.

<sup>10</sup> Harold Samuel.

people. Why may not the modern artist do the infinitely more precious preservation of an art that is dying? And what ethnologic dance is not dying before the onslaughts of jazz, and becoming hybrid under the influence of international cinemas? I have seen a real Gitano in a Seville café incorporate into his Farruca the squatting steps of the Russian Cossack.<sup>11</sup> Let us prefer the intelligent Farruca of Massine, mounted with all respect for tradition.

Let me point out here that this recent losing of the distinct character of certain dances by incorporating into them steps from opposing dances is not to be confused with the strange and interesting identity of step occurring often between widely separated peoples. It is true that the Hawaiian swings her hips in the identical way that the Arab does though with a vastly different scope. But the alien step is easily identified by the student. In the case mentioned above even the layman could see that the squat of the bloomer-clad Cossack was inappropriate to the skin-tight trousers of the Gitano! How much is the ignorant native diverted in his steps by the photos of the Folies Bergères and films of the "Albertina Rasch girls!" How seldom is the cultivated person interested in the dance of his own country!

<sup>11</sup> Since writing this book there has come to my hands a printed booklet of Escudero, in which that famous gitano dancer also mentions, with disappointment and disgust, the instance of the Cossack step in the Farruca. This dance which I saw in Sevilla in the fall of 1929, was doubtless the same dance and dancer described by Sr. Escudero.



It is granted that the histrionic talent and the technical equipment of the foreigner who interprets the ethnologic dance must be greater than that of the native. Yet the native, too, must be equipped to show the dance under all circumstances, or he is not an artist. Any one can dance when he is happy; but only the artist can fully crystallise and reproduce this spirit. The only advantage the native holds over the foreigner is a natural body carriage, which the foreigner must cultivate; and the absorption, rather than the study, of technical knowledge. In short, the foreigner has only a harder work but not necessarily one any the less productive.

This last excuse is the one most to be condoned since it is the only one which shows that the excuser is sneakingly conscious of his ignorance: although he knows nothing of a country's dance he trusts that the artist, being a native, does know. It is difficult for certain laymen to admit that another "foreigner" may know more than he himself does of a native art.

In spite of its obvious spontaneity, ethnologic dancing is very definitely bound by form; but not the form of the ballet, which form defines the limits of beauty. It is a form which limits the choreography to the expression of those sentiments which the folk have deemed decorous. The dance of the folk is more than a seeking of display: it is



a physical expression of a spiritual ideal: it is the embodiment of the goal of the race and the route of its consummation. In describing the Sardana, John Langdon-Davies writes, "it is a communal ceremony, a social ritual. Here is no desire of a moth for a star, but a symbol that one ant needs all the other ants in the ant-hill."<sup>12</sup> The fox-trot has the same goal as the Tarantella, yet the route is different; the Ramedjenis of India take the same route as the Devadasis, yet the goal is different. The folk-dance is a standardised expression of an unstandardised race. It is the "instinctive, communal utterance due to the desire on the part of the tribe or community to give concrete expression to spiritual conceptions, aspirations, and ideals felt and held in common. The basis of the dance, therefore, is unconscious and racial."<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that in the West the group movement is strictly governed while individual virtuosity is admired and encouraged so long as it does not interrupt the even rhythm of the group as a whole. Thus is the principle of our social organisation reflected in our dance-form.

The ethnologic dance is the energised expression of joy founded on a communal belief. For this reason it is the strongest, simplest, and sincerest choreographic expression. The Free Dance strives

<sup>12</sup> Langdon-Davies, John, "Dancing Catalans," *The Dance*, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Sharpe, Cecil J., "The Dance," *Introduction*, p. 3.

for truth, the Ballet for form; I do not seek to disprove in a sentence the worth of these schools which I have in a chapter past so painstakingly upheld. Yet it remains that "being good and being wise are open to two damning criticisms, first, nobody knows when they are being really good, and nobody can be always wise; and second, goodness and wisdom are egoistic, solitary, individualistic things at best: happiness has neither of these difficulties, for everybody knows when he is happy; and, what is equally important, everybody requires his neighbours' co-operation to make him happy. Happiness, in short, is communal and public-spirited." <sup>14</sup>

The form of the ethnologic dance, then, is the form of courtesy—a respect of your neighbour's comfort.

Those who are shocked at the dances of other folk are so because they see in them a sentiment which they deem indecorous. This is as illogic as it is unfair. Sir H. H. Johnston, viewing the dances of the pygmies of Africa, declares them "grossly indecent," yet admits the dancers to be both moral and decorous, and observes that they perform their dances "reverently." <sup>15</sup>

The evil, then, of the pygmies' dance lies in the eyes and mind of Sir Johnston. Those who see evil should be most careful in admitting it lest they con-

<sup>14</sup> Langdon-Davies, John, "Dancing Catalans," *Myth and Happiness*, p. 201.

<sup>15</sup> From Havelock Ellis' "Dance of Life," *Art of Dancing*.

fess in themselves a pitiable if not deplorable state of mind.

The real value of ethnologic dancing in international understanding is not to be overlooked. The sincere dancer has a "calling," a "message" as plain as his own nose! He is there to introduce, to explain, to vindicate one people to another. Waiving here the widespread malinterpretation of the actuating spirit of extrinsic dances, there exists, even so, a shocking ignorance of alien peoples. Seeing the dances of these races there is received, through the impressionable eye, a refutation of much maljudgment which is not easily attained by the printed word. Were the work I am now engaged in perfectly written by one whose profession is his pen, even he might fail where the perfect dancer demonstrating her art would succeed. And so that not rare enigma, the one who thinks Hawaiians are negro cannibals, seeing at last the fragrant naïveté of the Polynesian hulas, begins, to his intense surprise, to realise that this smile, these gestures could never spring from the bloody, superstitious nature of those tragic children of the Congo. Who, among those unfortunate many who have believed the Mexican a sinister, cringing half-breed, does not reverse opinion when he watches the happy Jarabe, or the clear-browed dignity of the Zandunga? What better counter-proof than the swinging Sevillanas to the one who declares the Spaniard "sensual

and gross." Sensuous, perhaps, but no other Western nation so entirely combines dignity and delicacy!

In New York, which is to-day undoubtedly the most lively of the dance centres, much attention has recently been given to the folk-dance. Whole programmes of these dances in original form have been presented; and many concert-artists in that city have devoted themselves to the interpretation of both authentic and stylised folk arts without running afoul of too much of the "three excuses" to make it possible. It is a long step in the right direction. No better road to a full understanding of the dance-art can be found than the one which begins in the first, unadulterated dances of peoples. They are the interesting, if somewhat subtle, key to the newer expressions of the dance-art. For since the dance-art is an outgrowth of the folk-dance—a polishing by the few of the creation of the many—one need only "back-trail" to find elemental truth. There is, indeed, nothing in any dance-art which cannot be found in the folk-dance. Emotionally, the principle of the Free Dance to present truth with an indifference to superficiality is the motive-power of the primitive dance, while the "beauty clothed in form" of the ballet is the foundation-thought of all oriental dancing. Technically, the examples are as many as the steps and gesticulations; let us choose only three; the justly famed "entre-chat" was known by the Spanish



peasant as the "cuarta" for generations before it was adopted by the ballet; the sense-hypnotising whirls of the moderns have been offered to the gods for centuries by the Dervishes; emotion, naturally expressed, as the Classics understand it, was an important part of Inca dances in the twelfth century. Dancing can never be new: it must always be a re-creation, even as is literature. Human emotions do not change: new words, new gestures are only expressive insofar as they recall old emotions, often through the medium of recalling old words and old gestures of these emotions. It is in no wise belittling to the newer art that it has been preceded by the folk. "Gone, gone again is summer the lovely," sings Edna St. Vincent Millay,<sup>16</sup> and none the less sweetly because in 1300 an unknown singer cried, "Wynter wakeneth al my care." But, reasoning thus, let us not call the folk-artist "re-creative" when he presents the first, the sincerest, and the purest physical expression of an emotion which is every day re-created by the "creative" artist.

Ethnologic dancing embodies far more than physical study, or artistic inspiration. It is psychological and historical in assimilation and technical and histrionic in exhibition. The study is endless and the difficulties many. For the dancer who dares bring to the platform the ethnologic dance in its authentic form, the disappointments are not less

<sup>16</sup> "The Buck in the Snow," "Song," p. 10.



than the difficulties, for public and critic know little of the traditions underlying the dances, and judge only by personal taste built on vague and often false informations. He who differentiates the technical shadings of the foot-beats of the same sound in Gato and Flamenco, in Hindu and Inca, has few observers beyond his own conscience to cheer him.

I do not think any art is more enjoyed and beloved by the uncritical public, and more misunderstood and underrated by the self-styled "intellectuals" than the ethnologic dance. The ignorance of art which smothers the Ballet and Free Dance is of simple fabric; but the "wet blanket" weighing on the ethnologic dance is of complex dyes and tissues.

"I'd rather see the real Incas dance in Cuzco than see somebody else dance as they do," says such-an-one. Doubtless. I'd also prefer to see the old Greeks dance at the Acropolis than the modern ones do the Charleston! This such-an-one is seemingly unaware that, artistically, one race is as dead as the other: that the "gaucho-on-horseback" is a figure of yesterday; and the original Bolero is forgotten in Spain. The ethnologic dance labours under this overwhelming ignorance of a pretentious humanity. It is a dance based so on fact that only knowledge gives full appreciation. One can pretend a rapture of the sentiments, an emotional elevation of the

soul; but knowledge is a dry word; either you know the "words" Shan-kar speaks with his subtle hands, or you don't! Your lack of knowledge may not decrease your enjoyment, but it will undoubtedly still after-the-theatre raptures to admiring listeners. And this is the greatest objection Mme. Public has toward the Ethnologic dance. She just cannot say supposedly-intelligent things about it! The ethnologic dancer, working under the intended snub of the term "re-creative artist," can only be thankful for the half-dozen of his audience who know and enjoy, and for the "gallery gods" who don't know, but enjoy; and school himself to be indifferent to the inflated critic of the morning after.

There was the critic who wrote of a Hindu dance as Spanish, and the other who thought a dance of Asturia (with castañuelos) was Austrian. And, in the past, there was also the critic who wrote that Nijinsky's "idiotic" modernism had killed ballet; and the one who declared Beethoven to be devoid of imagination!

## VII

### EASTERN DANCES

WE know that the dances of Egypt gave rise to those of Greece from which directly descended all Occidental choreography. But what of the Oriental dance? Here the task is not so easy. The beginnings of this art in China and India are too remote to be exactly traced through such material as is still extant.

*Chinese "Ou."*—It is safe to suppose that China, cradle of other arts and sciences, is also the cradle of the dance. Dancing seems to have first appeared in China as a vehicle for the teaching of love and respect for beauty and goodness. Gradually these dances assumed the aspect of religious rituals which, since the Emperor was considered the earthly reflection of the celestial spirits, soon took on a political complexion. "You can tell a king by the state of the dancing during his reign," says an old Chinese proverb. It is said that when an Emperor was displeased with a high official, he did not make it known by proclamation or vulgar speech, but he invited the dignitary to court and then, at the fête accorded him, showed only half the number of

dancers usually employed in court ballets. Thus was the Emperor's displeasure exposed!

The oldest known ballet is revealed to us through a fragment of conversation between King-Fou-Tsee and Pin-Mou-Kia; this ballet was a pantomime in six acts and was composed by the Emperor Ou-Wang, who also composed the accompanying music. In the dances of to-day we see the imprint of this great antiquity. They might, from our viewpoint, be rather called highly-stylised pantomimes than dances. The subject-matter, whether it be allegorical, representative or mythical, is presented with a minuteness of detail which is confusing to the occidental eye. No more perfect comparison can be found than in the old Chinese embroidery, in whose execution time was without value, and whose every infinitesimal detail is worked out with a care that scorns the broad "effective" lines of lesser artists. The dances of China seen on their native heath are interminable! Two warriors in combat may occupy the stage for an hour, their every movement one of perfect and slow stylisation which is at once a joy to the eye yet a strain on Western nerves. The scope has weakened but not changed since the birth of the dance so many centuries ago. The modern actor-dancer (for these two arts are, in the East, considered inseparable) uses as material tales which teach the goodness of beauty and the beauty of goodness; and those less tangible dances, the Flag



Dance, the Feather Dance, or the Dance of Arms, have for the initiated a more obscure yet deeper-rooted lesson to teach—patriotism, the pleasures of peace, or the hardships of war. To realise the scope, which is to teach the mind, it is necessary to uplift the spirit, and no pain is too great to daunt the perfection of the beauty which is the greatest of all mediums for the soul's exaltation. Nature has granted a rare physical response to the yellow race, and this natural facility he trains tirelessly that he may simulate his combat by the flashing juggling of the sword, and the supple tumbling of the pierced body. It is a pictoric art par excellence; the very expression of the face is stylised, players more often than not wearing masks; the costumes are miracles of complicated embroideries; sometimes objects are carried in the hands, the handling of which forms the entire dance (such as flags, wands, spears, etc.). I have seen a Chinese heroine who, under the knowledge that she is about to be poisoned, is stricken with terror. The powdered face was an impassive mask; her hands hung relaxed at her sides; but so violently did her entire silk-encased body tremble that the wired ornaments of her high head-dress danced; this was terror.

The last vestiges of the religious dances as such have died out—those postures with a triple pheasant's feather in the hand, the hymn of Confucius, and the masked devil dancers of the Lama temple



—but Mei-Lan-Fang has definitely brought them to the stage. This actor-dancer, idol of his country, is a fitting priest of the great art of China. In his hands the dances lose nothing of their original and intricate beauty, or of their lofty and psychological ideals.

*Japanese "Kagura," "No," and "Odori."*—Japan imported her dance from China. Yet, even as she imported her other arts from the Celestial Empire, only to develop them later in her own way, so has her dance taken on a colour distinctly different from that of her neighbour. With its roots firmly implanted in religion, and its development the concern of kings and scholars, the æsthetic power of the dance in Japan is not to be overestimated. Like the Chinese, the Japanese dance is pantomimic in nature and its gestures are also highly stylised, though along different lines and of different character. They are deeply expressive as the Oriental understands expression, which is the clear employment of conventionalised gestures; and they are strongly emotional, but an emotion without the passionate exteriorisation of the West. The movements of head, body and limbs are the result of centuries of tradition, each smallest gesture having its own meaning, though to the eye of the uninitiated these gestures are remote from the natural expression of their meanings. It is an art which has a purely intellectual appeal. The legato effect

of flowing movement which gives such an impression of ease is only attained by years of rigid study, for it is said that the ideal of the Japanese artist is "art hidden by its own perfection."

The oldest dances are the Kagura (religious) which are said to have sprung directly from the Bagaku, a Chinese dance introduced into Japan 2000 years ago. The Kagura are performed on stages erected in the temples on stated occasions and, accompanied by chants, are composed of swaying, posturing and slow gestures. A miko, or shrine dancer (a woman) brought the Kagura from the temple to the theatre from which grew the "No," or classical, dance.

"No" dancing, one of the few existing relics of ancient Japan, is 800 years old, yet has changed little since its birth. Even to-day nearly all parts are taken by men, women having been prohibited the theatre until very recently. "No" means accomplishment; for in its earlier years it was protected by the Emperor, and was performed only by the highest-born, and the military men. In our own interpretation "No" is not pure dancing, for it is a combination of the three musical arts—poetry, music and dancing. It is performed by a chorus which sits at one side intoning the story and the dialogue, while the actor-dancers in the middle of the stage pantomime with dignified step and serious gesture the content of the drama. Masks are always

worn by the dancers, and the slowness of step can be somewhat calculated when one knows that the dancing sometimes goes on for four hours without cessation. The subject-matter is drawn from incidents in the lives of historical and mythical heroes and heroines, and both for this reason and because of the learning necessary for the full interpretation of the pantomime, the "No" has an appeal only for the cultured classes. Exalted from a popular pastime by the Buddhist priests who soon transformed it to teach their doctrine, it has taken on the melancholy character of that religion and, in spite of its perfection of style, classicism of language and nobleness of sentiment, remains so pessimistic in spirit that its sheer beauty cannot rise above this to a general appeal.

The "Odori," or popular dances, come more into the realm of dancing as we understand it. The term "odori" covers two types: the first is the folk-dance, the dance of the people. Who dares to name the origin, to guess at the date of birth? For was not this rhythmic movement of the human body in all lands brought to light with the human race? No record exists of the beginnings of the Odori of the people, for the people have always danced. As in less exotic lands, the Odori take the form of large organised masses, colourfully clothed; yet the Japanese talent for organisation, and the brightness of his garments have already lifted his folk-dance

above the rank and file of such manifestations. And again, although these dances, like all folk-dances, lack technical skill, their naturally smooth movements, nearly feline in their suppleness, add immeasurably to the perfection of the performance. Subject-matter is of a joyfully religious character (called Bon-Odori) or portrays the activities of every-day life. The second type of Odori is the repertoire of the geisha. Much misunderstood, this charming creature has been interpreted as everything from a super-vicious courtesan to a common waitress. Let us establish the levels of common sense! She is an artist, and a thorough one. Her private life and morals are a matter of her personal inclination, and have nothing to do with her profession. What her profession *does* demand of her is intelligence, culture, and a complete knowledge of singing, poetry and dancing. It is far more than is demanded, or expected, of the Western dancer—let us leave her private life and difficulties alone! Be sure that the acquirement of the technique of her art concerns her for as many years as the ballerina puts into her own “pas.” With waving of wing-like sleeves, manipulation of gaily-coloured fans, stamping of linen-socked feet and soft clapping of hands, she dances for you subjects from Shintoism, celebrates the changes of nature, depicts every imaginable emotion, or pantomimes old fables whose subject-matter may be refined or coarse, re-



ligious or profane; but whatever she does for you, from extemporising a poem to pouring, with minute ceremony, your tea, she does with a supple grace and rare charm that, once seen, is never forgotten.

*Hindu "Natya."*—"Rhavani, dancing in joy, saw come from her breasts three eggs. And from these three eggs came forth the three gods—Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Siva, the Destroyer." ". . . In the night of Brahma nature is inert and cannot dance until Siva wills it; he rises from his rapture and sends through inert matter pulsing waves of awakening sound, and lo! matter also dances, appearing as a glory round about him. Dancing, he sustains its manifold phenomena. In the fullness of time, still dancing, he destroys all names and forms by fire and gives new rest."<sup>1</sup> Thus the dance creates the gods who by the dance create the worlds and dancing, destroy them again for re-creation.

Born of his religion, symbolic of his salvation, allegorical teacher of his faith, the dance stands at the very apex of all the arts of India. Wherever one turns one sees the importance of the dance in the life and death of the Hindu. It is the golden thread run through the fabric of his existence; the blood of his hope and the bone of his faith. It has enjoyed the respect and regard of the people and the

<sup>1</sup> Coomeraswamy, "The Dance of Siva," p. 66.



loving labour of the finest minds for its betterment, and it abounds in a history, both actual and legendary, which is incomputable. No dance of India, however secular, but is touched to simple dignity by the blood of its remote birth in the temple. It is said that Siva, whose most loved name is Nataraja, Lord of Dancers, performs his divine dances spontaneously because he is a god; but man, whose every virtue is conscious, cannot trust to his inner nature to produce the perfect gesture to express the perfect mood. So Brahma framed the rules and scriptures of Natya, complete in four thousand verses, which he gave to mortals as a means to attain expression through movement. The word "Natya" means both drama and dance, for it is impossible for the Oriental to separate these two, finding that to dance without acting, or to act without rhythmic motion, is impossible.

There are two types of Natya as practised in India to-day—the Peninsula and the Northern. The centre of the former is the city of Tanjore; here it is more strictly religious than the Northern, and is far richer and wider in its field. Pantomime is much employed, sometimes the theme is the incident from the life of a god, or sometimes a more fragile subject, as a maid's activities in her garden. It is a spontaneous art, appealing directly to the emotions, and bound in the technique of the long study of perfect beauty. The Northern school of Delhi and

Lucknow is more secular, and, paradoxically, more austere. The appeal to the spectator is more an intellectual one, and the dance itself more decorated with steps and gestures whose object is pure beauty without deeper pantomimic meaning. Yet both these schools are alike in quality of line and gesture. Always rhythmic, always soft, each posture is so complete in itself, so formulated in beauty, that the dance could be stopped at any moment of its execution and find a perfect termination. For the Hindu dance does not concern itself with sensationalism of climax in movement as does the Western school. It has long ago passed, as we see by ancient carvings and paintings, the development through acrobatics which holds so strong an appeal for the Occidental. The art aims not to astonish, but to soothe; it eschews the realistic and seeks by the simplest outlines to portray the spiritual. The abstract analysis of the Hindu is as apparent in his dance as in his philosophy. Thus he avoids the superfluous, the obvious, the superficial, and concerns himself with the essential curve of the movement, the essence of the rhythmic line.

Under the term "Natyā" lie several sub-divisions. "Nrtyā" is "Marga," or high, and applies to set dances of a special subject, such as are used in the Peninsula school. "Nrta" is "Desi," or popular, and applies to rhythmic dances without theme, such as are generally used in the Northern school. There is

a two-fold division of these two, "Tandava" and "Lasya." The first represents a direct cosmic activity, as the violent dances of Siva in the burning ground; and the second, which are narrative dances, are softer of movement, being performed by Apsaras, in Indra's <sup>2</sup> Paradise, and Devadasis (temple dancers) and Nacnis (secular dancers) upon earth. The "Nautch" is a form of dance which sets forth a given theme by means of song and gesture combined. The Delhi school excels in the Nautch, which is the best surviving example of Hindu Natya.

The beauty of Natya lies in perfect knowledge. It is an art of deep and deliberate study, the result of long and conscious discipline. ("When the curtain arises it is too late to begin the making of a new work of art!" <sup>3</sup>) The rules of Natya set forth the three elements of bodily gesture, limbs, parts of the body, and features. So minute are the details, so studied the effects, that even the widening of the pupils of the eyes has a name and a significance and must be responsive to the will of the actor! These details are lost on the uninitiated as are, indeed, the larger gestures of arms and hands and head, each of which has a mythological birth, a technical name, a patron deity and countless moods and meanings. It is, in short, an art in which, for full appreciation,

<sup>2</sup> One of the major gods devoted to dancing.

<sup>3</sup> Coomeraswamy, "The Mirror of Gesture," p. 3.

or let us say for full understanding, the watcher must be as learned as the artist.

The feet of the Hindu are generally subordinated to the arms and body. Encircled with bells, they beat time and counter-time in intricate rhythmic effects. They are the accompaniment to the upper body. The torso-movement is much more moderated than is popularly supposed. Where the dances of Arabia and the South Seas are characterised by the circular hip movement, the Hindu never employs it, but only sways from side to side. Also his shoulder movement is circular and must not be confused with the Arabian, which is forward and back. The characteristic "snake" movement of the arms begins in the shoulders with this rotation, and reaches in waves down to the finger-tips. The hands, which express the greater part of the pantomime, are subtle, apparently boneless in their fluidity, and whether moving fast or slow, are never jerky. The head has four characteristic movements: horizontally from side to side (*Sundari*); an upward movement on both sides (*Tirascina*), (this movement is much seen in dances of China and Japan); from right to left in a half-moon (*Parivatita*); like a pigeon (*Prakampita*). The movements of eyes and brows are numberless, but it is to be noted that there is no expression given to the mouth.

The essence of the Hindu dance is spiritual. The legends which form the better part of the subject



matter for group and solo dances are taken from the endless loves of the gods. Interpreted literally, these legends might well stamp the gods as hardly godly. But the stories are purely allegorical and as such must be judged. The Hindu has found that mortal love is the closest we may attain to heaven in this life,<sup>4</sup> and thus he has exalted the emotion, making it the symbol of union with God. For the Hindu dance is meant to fulfil a higher end than that of mere entertainment. It is declared that it yields the achievement of the Four Aims of Human Life—Virtue, Wealth, Pleasure, and Spiritual Freedom.

*The Javanese "Wajang Wong" and Srimpi and Bedoyo Dancers.*—In 100 A.D. the Hindu migration into Java brought certain forms of art and religion which, superimposed upon the then existing beliefs of the natives gave birth to an art of rare beauty and interest. The Sultan and his kin are the entire support of this far-famed "Wajang Wong," the group of actor-dancers who, trained from childhood for the parts they play, present a performance of such rare perfection as to be rather a dream than a reality. These ballets, whose entire reproduction lasts four days of sixteen hours each (from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M.), are detailed representations of ancient Hindu mythology, two favourites being the epic poems of "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata." The

<sup>4</sup> Sahaja, an intricate Hindu philosophy treats this belief.



meanings of these "lacons" or legends are, like the Hindu, entirely allegorical, and so profoundly are the dancers steeped in the lore that they often fall into a sort of religious trance while working. Save for rare and sporadic dialogue between the actors, the story is chanted by the chorus to the accompaniment of the *gamellan* and *rebab*. Each incident in the pantomimed tale is told so fully, so exquisitely, that it stands as a single jewel without need of the preceding or following incidents to make it perfect. Perhaps a young prince is about to wed. For a half-hour he holds the stage alone, each of his slow and graceful gestures whimsically suggestive of the state to which sentiment can reduce a young man. The story, in fact, is only a vehicle to carry the amazingly lovely solos and groups. All this finesse of pantomime is attained with the arms and hands and head. The features, covered with yellowish powder, and with the eyebrows shaved to guarantee immobility of facial expression, have become a mask under the jewel-studded, leather head-dress. If the scene is between a princess and her lover (women's parts are taken by young boys), these two will act out the whole course of the courtship, taking about three-quarters of an hour. With quick, deft movements of wrist and neck, they show doubts and quarrels and joys. Individual combat is much in evidence as an excuse for a lively "pas de deux." There also appear from time to time a couple who

give "comedy relief," and these, needless to say, are very popular. Many of the parts are taken by the Sultan's own relatives, Prince Adikusomo, his brother, being the greatest dancer-actor of Java.

Of no less exalted rank are the Srimpi dancers, who are the daughters and step-daughters of the Sultan. Naturally, the dance is not a profession for these young ladies, but a finishing of their education, teaching grace of carriage and knowledge of the national legends. The Srimpis are extremely young, for at the age of fourteen (having attained puberty) they cease dancing and are married according to their father's wish. Their dances are less theatrical both in costuming and movement than the dances of the Wajang Wong. But the same staccato movements mark both techniques; as do the immobile face and writhing arms. The feet of the Srimpi are modestly unobtrusive, only appearing from time to time to point the toe in one direction and then, inexplicably, quickly point it in another!

The Bedojos are, like the Srimpis, court dancers, wearing the same type of costumes and executing the same dances with the same technique. But the Bedojos perform in groups of nine, while the Srimpis perform in groups of four. Also the Bedojos are professionals in the sense that they are retained at court solely for the object of dancing. They are chosen from among the people at a very tender age and carried away to the palace to spend their youth

in learning and representing the intricate ancient dances of their country. When beauty begins to fade (at about 20 or 25) the Bedoyo is returned to her family, unless she has borne a child to the Sultan, in which case she is retained in the palace to become a harem wife, a ballet mistress, or the wife of one of the court nobles. Virtuosity is to keep the lower part of the body motionless, or nearly so, while the upper body turns and twists, the arms move rhythmically with an apparently boneless suppleness, and fingers turn far back into flowering curves. Poetry, drama and music are integral parts of the dancer's education. The exact meaning of these court dances is unknown, even to the most learned of the Javanese. It is supposed that they were originally temple dances, executed by priestesses for the greater glory of the triumvirate of Hindu gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Their chief characteristic is a close observance of ancient tradition. Every gesture, every step, every detail of costume, is done as it has been done for many centuries. The perfect ballerina completely effaces any sign of her own personality, becoming for the time the vehicle of decorative beauty as it was thought and taught long ago. The indicated pantomimes are the height of stylisation, combats being carried on with miniature bow and arrow or brightly painted stick and dainty kris,<sup>5</sup> all carried in curved tips of

<sup>5</sup> An extra-long dagger with a wavy blade.

slender fingers. The scarf which, tied about the waist, hangs down in front of the batik skirt, serves in these agile hands an endlessly variable decorative effect.

Based on the ideals of the Hindu Natya, each gesture a word, each dance a tale of Gods and Titans, the Javanese accents even more than the Indian the arms, head, and body, and even less the feet. While the Hindu dance confines facial expression to the eyes and brows, the Javanese eschews even this. Of all the stylised dances of the East, the Javanese and Cambodian are the most high and arabesque stylisations.

*Cambodia.*—The court ballet of Cambodia, trained for many hours a day, and for many years, have brought to a point of virtuosity which borders on acrobaticism the technique which characterises the dances of Java. The articulations in arms and hands are so loosened that the elbows turn back to an amazing angle, and the fingers and wrists are trained to curve out until they are entirely inhuman. But the pantomimed legends remain the same, as do the long and intricate scenes between different characters. Also the Cambodian whitens the face and paints the lips vermilion until they really appear as Apsaras, hardly resembling their little brown selves. Their costumes are stiff with jewels, and display nothing but the face, feet and hands. Their “prache-dee” head-dresses are heavy with metal and stones,



yet long practice makes it possible for the little heads to move beneath them with a bird-like staccato. Long lines of dancers move with a rarely unified movement, appearing as a living frieze from an ancient picture. The Hanauman<sup>6</sup> dancers are men. They wear masks, and, representing the monkey tribe, are quick and free of movement, even using the floor work and quick turns characteristic of the Russian!

*Burma.*—Burma, lying between India and Java, partakes of the characteristics of both. The costumes with the upcurved wings on the hips, have long sleeves and skirts, but the hair is dressed and decorated rather more in the Hindu style. Also the body movements are more Hindu than Javanese, while the hands and arms, though strongly reminiscent of Java, are yet far less accentuated in the back curve of their articulations. There is little foot work and the movements, staccato like the Javanese yet swift like the Hindu, give an effect of fluttering birds. Faces are painted white and occasionally fans, bows and arrows, and other properties are used.

*North Africa.*—Mohammed, the Prophet, forbade that his followers depict, either in paint or clay, the form of any living thing. It followed that, as a blind man has a keener sense of sound, so the Arab, deprived of these most natural means of ex-

<sup>6</sup> Monkey-god.



pressing their appreciation of beauty, found himself doubly talented in the art of picture-making through the dance. The Arab, like the more stable peoples of the East, expresses himself through traditional movements, each one of which has a specified meaning. These movements are far less complicated than those of the Hindu, and are not stylised beyond the point of the understanding of the intellectual Occidental watcher. The body carriage is more natural, and the movements of arms less studied; of head movements only the "Sundari" is used. There are four types of dances: of the cafés, of the harem, for the entertainment of guests, and those which tell news. The latter is again the result of Mohammed's teaching, for very little printing outside of the Koran is allowed by his religion. The men glean their news in the market place, but the women, shut off from this source, depend upon two women who wander from place to place like ancient bards; one dancing, the other singing a nasal accompaniment, they tell the news of the outside world. The dances of religion and war are executed mostly by men; those of sex, flirtation and lighter pantomime, by women. The sensuality which marks the Arabian dance is far less spiritual than that of the Hindu, though again, less shocking to the layman than certain dances of Turkey. Yet the sensuality is of a frankness that excuses it by its very sincerity, and the professional dancer of the café, the Ouled Nail,

generally performs with a detached boredom, or stereotyped smile, which considerably cools the effect of her writhing body. But whether the dance be of purely sexual display, or with the higher scope of relating a tale, the movement is always of a round and flowing continuity, of an even and easy grace. Seldom do the feet leave the floor; when they do they are raised somewhat stiffly and from the knee. The space employed by the dancer is hardly larger than a table-top. The feline movement which never stops, the monotonous rhythm which never varies—these work at last on the nerves until, drunk with them, the watcher relaxes and with half closed eyes, gives himself over to the pure sensuality of the performance. The nomad race have drawn their choreography from many sources (the Dance of Spilled Meal, in which the dancer traces patterns in the meal, is from India, for example, as are many others); yet over them all is cast this glamour of sameness, of mystery, of a closed gate and dirty wall, which promises the softly-lit beauty within. In short, that atmosphere which emanates not only from the narrow minaret-crowned streets of Morocco but from the very threads of the fantastic handwork which one brings away.

Little subservient to tradition, the costume, gesture and facial expression are largely a matter of the taste of the dancer. She wears far more clothes than are generally accredited to her, especially as, if she

comes West, semi-nudity is immediately required of her by an enterprising manager. Her hands and arms are, I repeat, subject to her own whim, yet the flat hand and the supple arms of the Hindu is much seen. But her body movement is native! Shoulders are shaken back and forth, which gives a far different effect from the circular movement of the Hindu; and the abdomen is verily dislocated from the waist and hips! The hips swing in unbelievably wide circles, and jerk forward with swiftness and precision. It is perhaps unnecessary to mention that the famous (or should one say infamous?) "*danse du ventre*" is a pantomime of sexual possession. That, undecorated, and no more.<sup>7</sup> The unexpurgated edition comes from Turkey. Among the Arabs this same movement used as a decoration in other dances has no more the same meaning than (let us say to our shame) a kiss and a marriage. It is only the suggestion, the intimation. And be sure that to acquire this extraordinary technique of the body, rolling the hips whilst standing still, while moving the feet, while squatting, and

<sup>7</sup> Some light is thrown on the origin of the "*danse du ventre*" by Armen Ohanian in her book "*The Dancer of Shamahka*." . . . "Thus in Cairo one evening I saw, with sick, incredulous eyes, one of our most sacred dances degraded into a bestiality horrible and revolting. It was our poem of the mystery and pain of motherhood, which all true Asiatic men watch with reverence and humility, in the far-away corners of Asia where the destructive breath of the Occident has not yet penetrated. . . . Could any man born of woman contemplate this most holy subject expressed in an art so pure and so ritualistic as our Eastern dance, with less than profound reverence? . . . But the spirit of the Occident has touched this holy dance, and it became horrible '*danse du ventre*,' the '*hoochie-koochie*'" (pp. 261, 262).

while walking on the knees, is no mean task and its accomplishment long and arduous. It is said that an Egyptian dancing girl "can lie on her back and, with a full glass of water standing on one side of her abdomen and an empty glass on the other, can by the contraction of the muscles on the side supporting the full glass, project the water from it so as to fill the empty glass."<sup>8</sup> It is as much a technique as the toe-dance, and that we do not appreciate it is due to our ignorance of its difficulty, its tradition, and its meaning.

The Arab dances much with properties, not the least interesting of them being the handkerchiefs which are handled with both significance and grace and, when thrown to an admirer in the café, serve as a passport to the dancer's room. More beautiful, and perhaps less shocking, are the dances designed to entertain respected guests. Slaves are retained for this, and their pantomimes of greeting are beautiful studies in hospitality. Technique in the different localities differs slightly, some cities laying more stress on the arms, others on the body and still others on the feet. Yet these differences are always comparatively slight, the main scope remaining always the same.

*Hawaiian Hulas.*—Though geographically without right in the group of oriental dances, those of Hawaii belong, choreographically, there and no-

<sup>8</sup> Ellis, Havelock, "The Dance of Life," *The Art of Dancing*.



where else! They are, in everything, similar to the Eastern and equally dissimilar to the Western. First, they were created as religious rituals glorifying their island gods; before the Bij Kuahu of the goddess Laka or at the crater of Mauna Loa where resides the fire goddess, Pele. To the Hawaiian, dancing is not primarily merely a form of amusement, but was, together with singing and music, the entire education of the people. The scope then, being religious and educational, is identical with that of the dances of China or India. Like the Javanese, they tell stories; the adventures of King David Halakaua (Kawika Hula); the love-legend of King Kalakaua (Alekoki Hula); or like the Arab, they have the fragile, spontaneous, pantomimic greeting in the modern Hualalei Hula. Every gesture has a meaning established by tradition. The Liliu E was composed to exalt Queen Lilioukalani and, with slow and sober dignity, declaims the beauties of body and mind of Her Majesty. The feet are somewhat livelier than further East, as befits an outdoor people, yet they are always and entirely a subservient accompaniment to the softly-waving arms and swinging hips. More often than not the Hulas are executed in groups. The face remains blandly expressionless, unless the dancer smiles at, or giggles with, her companions. For her audience she has little apparent interest—which is another point in common with the Easterns. Some dances are per-

formed sitting down, as the Bamboo Hula (Puili) and the Gourd Hula (Uliuli). These date back to the time before the missionaries came, when the women were still wearing as garment a length of tapa-cloth (pounded by hand from the bark of the mulberry tree) falling from under the arm to below the knee, and whose stiffness made easy movement in the dance impossible. It was later that the grass skirt (Pau) came, bringing with it the rotary movement of the hips, so like the Arabian, yet so different in its intent. For the Hawaiian swings her hips to swing her skirt, and when a long row of dancers sway the supple strands in unison the effect is very lovely indeed. But it is the arms upon which is expended the greatest care. They writhe like serpents; they curve like a swan's neck; the slender fingers open and close like blossoming flowers on a subtle wrist. This undulation of arm is, indeed, the virtuosity of the hula and is practised, scarcely with less grace, by men as well as by women. Contrary to the interpretation of some Western dancers, the Hawaiian never shakes either her head, hands, or shoulders. Naturally the gestures are more naïve, more natural since their meanings are simpler, than the gestures of the East: "Picking flowers," "Looking for her lover," "Round the island." Yet, I repeat, choreographically the kinship between this beautiful island and the an-

cient East is so obvious as to form the basis for much interesting ethnologic conjecture.

*Summary.*—To cover all the interesting dances of all the beautiful countries of the Orient is impossible in the too-limited space at my disposal. I have selected those which are more highly developed, or which are being brought to the stages of the Occident. The dances of Ceylon, of Turkey, of Afghanistan and Baluchistan, of Bengali, etc., etc., however interesting, belong more to the realm of the ethnologic student than the student of the dance-art. Let us hope that they too will soon find their emissaries to the West, that we may learn to know and understand them as we strive to know and understand the dances of Shan-kar and Nad-jadjewa.

There are several points which practically all Eastern dances share, and which differentiate them so entirely from our Western choreography, that I feel it is well to recall them again briefly. The Oriental has little or no recourse to scenery, and his properties are of the simplest. The feet are invariably in second place to the upper body, the toed-in foot being more characteristic of the yellow races than of the brown. The dances are largely pantomimic and traditional. They serve a two-fold end, that of entertainment coupled with a psychologic or philosophic, lesson. There is an even continuity of flowing movement that entirely

excludes climax. Where Occidental dancing is essentially motional, Oriental is emotional. Where our younger civilisation and colder climate call for exuberant dancing of the legs, the Easterner finds his pleasure in the joys of the spirit as expressed, with calm and thought, through arms and body. It is the joys of children as against the joys of old men; energetic movement is the happiness of the child; philosophic contemplation that of the old man.



## VIII

### THE SPANISH DANCE

SPANISH dancing is the bridge between Orient and Occident. Partaking something of the characteristics of both, it is understood by Easterner and Westerner alike. It is doubtful if any other ethnologic dance has attained such heights of popularity. Vuillier, writing at the close of the last century, said, "Spain is to-day what Greece once was, the classic land of the dance!"<sup>1</sup> Since earliest occidental history it has been the richest, most varied, and most highly developed of all the Western folk-dances. So thorough is its fundamental nobility and so finished its technique that many exponents of the Italian ballet concede to it "superiority over all in that aspect of beauty which is concerned with majesty of line and posture."<sup>2</sup>

In the days of the Carthaginians, Cadiz, then called Gadir, was a centre of art and culture, with dancing already developed to a high state of perfection. Rome, astonished and delighted with these

<sup>1</sup> Vuillier, Gaston, "La Danse," p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> Kinneys, The, "The Dance," Spanish Dancing, p. 121.

dancers of Gadir, introduced them into her brilliant capital, where they at once created a furore. Called "Gaditanes" after their city, they soon became the toast of the Eternal City, and no fête was complete without them. Even then their passionate ardour was the subject of poet pens. Pliny, Silias, Italicus, Petrone, Apeio, Strabon and many others have left immortal rhapsodies of the seduction of the Andalusian dance. It has even been sustained by one writer that Telethusa the Gaditane celebrated in the epigrams of Martial, was the subject of the famous Venus Callipyge.

At last Rome, grown infirm, left Spain to the Visigoth, and that barbarian, destroying architecture, painting, literature and sculpture, failed at least in destroying the dance of Iberia. The Gaditanes hurried back to their native land before the invading Goths. The Middle Ages, yielding up little history even of central Europe, have wrapped in complete obscurity the progress of the dance in Spain. One only knows that it lived on the slender diet of love behind the walls of the patios,<sup>3</sup> losing nothing of the "voluptuous seduction" of the "Andaluces delicias."

When the Moor came to Andalusia, many natives fled to Asturia. Here began the choreographic difference between southern and northern Spain. The philosophic Oriental, old in art and living in

<sup>3</sup> Inner garden of a Spanish house.

poetry, enriched with his protection and knowledge the dances of southern Spain, while in the central and northern provinces the dance adapted itself to the hardier life and climate. Under the golden reign of "los Reyes Catolicos" began a new era. From that time forward the political successes of Spain made it possible for her to bring forth her beloved daughter and lavish on her all the advantages of social and financial protection. Masques and fêtes soon became the most popular pastimes, and the entire country came out to dance. Dance after dance was created and each one found such favour with the rest of Europe that it at once became the fashion. The Pavane, which imitates the superb and pretentious attitudes of the royal peacock; the Tordion; the Passe-calle; the Passe-pied; the Chaconne which, says Fernandez de Cordoba, is an ancient gaditane dance, called "Ole Gaditane"; the Follies de España; and the Sarabanda, most popular of all, which was presented for the first time in Sevilla in 1588. Under Philippe IV the Spanish dance took another vigorous stride forward. The king, himself much enamoured of this art, introduced it into the theatres. The "danzas habladas" became the mode. Cervantes in "Don Quixote" has described one of these mythological, allegorical ballets.

As the "Danzas Habladas" had replaced in popularity the Sarabanda and the Chaconne, so now

there appeared a new type of choreography which swept all before it, and the austerity of the old Pavane gave place to the exciting whirl of the passionate castañuelas. These dances came from Andalusia, their original fire not subdued, but only made more mysterious by the dark beauty of the invading Arab. The first of these dances to appear was the Fandango. Of the Fandango Thomas Yriarte, the poet, has written: "Where can be so barbaric a folk that does not exalt in hearing the airs of the national dances? To the accents of the Fandango all Spain shivers. This is the national air par excellence which accompanies the most graceful and the most fiery of dances . . . The music of the Fandango, as an electric spark, touches and animates all hearts. . . . The dancers move, each in his place, some with castañuelas, others imitating the sound with the snapping of fingers; the women are captivating in their lightness, their flexibility of movement, and grace of attitude. They mark the measure with a fine rhythm, hammering the floor with the heels of their dainty shoes. The couples flirt with each other, tease and pursue each other; then suddenly the music stops, and the art of the dancer is to stop as suddenly in statuesque immobility. Then the orchestra recommences, and again the Fandango breaks into life. In a word the guitar, the violins, the tapping of heels, the clacking of castañuelas, the snapping of fingers and the sup-



ple movements of the dancers, fill all the air with a delirium of joy and of pleasure!"

In this picture we see much of the dance which reigns to-day in a world which loves the "bailes españoles." Pierre Martin, writing in 1712, declares that the Fandango was celebrated in Cadiz for many centuries, and the good Father's enthusiasm for its "capricious steps" is nearly unclerical!

The Bolero, following hard upon the heels of the Fandango, was much like its predecessor, yet more distinguished of movement and mood. Certain professionals trace this refinement back to its kinship with the Chaconne and Sarabanda. Executed by a couple the bolero incorporated in its classical form, the air-work then existing in the ballet. For the execution of the "cuarto" or "entre-chat," and the "pas-frappes," the heelless slipper of the coryphée was necessary. Undoubtedly this type of finesse in the foot-technique coupled with the rhythmic castañuelas is difficult of achievement, being, indeed, the vehicle to fame of many celebrated danseuses. Yet hardly of the beauty of artistic proportion is the spectacle of a Spanish body pirouetting on ballet legs. The invention of this famous dance is claimed by one, Sebastian Cerezo, a bailarin of the reign of Charles III, and so deep and unchanged has been its popularity that Busquets<sup>4</sup> has named it the national dance of Spain. The Cachucha, which had

<sup>4</sup> Busquets, Llobet, "Bailes Tipicos de España."

absorbed the Chaconne and Sarabanda, was, in turn, absorbed by the Seguidillas whose coplas now swept all Spain. But, unlike the Cachucha and Fandango, the popularity of the Seguidillas has continued to grow with the years, until to-day there is no Andalusian who does not know its steps.

As spontaneous as it seems, and, in reality is, the Spanish dance is bound in every detail by the rules of custom. The continuity of the steps is left to the inspiration of the dancer, but the steps themselves are prescribed so rigidly that the addition of a new one is regarded with a disapproval which is not slow in bespeaking itself while the confusion of putting a Tango step in a Farruca is rank heresy! No less are the details of costume ordered. Any other colour of scarf than red or white with a blue dress whose print shows white dots, blatantly proclaims the "estranjero."<sup>5</sup> And, paradoxical as it may seem, nevertheless it is true that until you understand these actual and spiritual details you can not feel that ecstatic tightening of the throat preceding the hoarse shout of "Ole" that gives vent to the frenzy of rhythm-madness which overtakes every true son of Iberia. For the dance is a part of the spiritual life of the Spaniard. "If you deprive a Spaniard of his Chocolate a la canella he will sicken; but if you deprive him of the dance he

<sup>5</sup> Foreigner.

will die!"<sup>6</sup> Neither birth, nor marriage, nor death, nor village fête, nor theatrical performance is complete without the dance. In Andalusia when the street pianino grinds out a servillanas (as it only too often does!) children in the streets gather to dance, and "palillos"<sup>7</sup> pop out of pockets in the houses of commoner folk. I have seen an old washerwoman, sudsy-armed, weeping over a costume which recalled to her the glory of Pastora Imperio: and the daughters of the King of Spain were pupils of Maestro Otero! It is a common ground on which all ages and conditions meet. It is, to the Spaniard what our national hymn and dearest love-song and memoried lullaby all rolled into one, is to us; it is the motional explosion of emotional compression. It is the Spanish dance!

But I, who have set out to write a brief book of dry facts, find myself wasting my reader's time and my publisher's paper with poetics, which, however one tries, will come to the mind at the mention of Spain.

In general line the dances of Spain can be divided into three different types: the *Paysano*, the *Andalusian* and the *Flamenco*. These divisions are not made geographically but choreographically, for the Flamencos live in Andalusia.

*Paysano*.<sup>8</sup>—In making this triple division, I find

<sup>6</sup> Charbonnel, "La Danse," p. 337.

<sup>7</sup> Castanettes.

<sup>8</sup> Peasant.

myself at once confronted with the unwieldy bulk of the folk-dances of nearly an entire nation. Yet, in general line these are not unlike, indeed many of them differing only in name. The steps are such as suit the rope-soled "alpargadas,"<sup>9</sup> the full skirt and the basque of the peasant. A certain amount of shyness, even awkwardness is apparent, for these are the dances which came into being to express the joy of people of the soil, and are in no way meant for the astonishment of the spectator. Of course here and there one sees the leap, the kick, and the whirl, all of which are calculated to display a pretty ankle or enhance a man's ability in the eyes of his lady. Many are "round-dances," and these nearly always indicate a desire more for physical exercise than for the creation of beauty. Through all these folk-dances runs a sort of dignity, not so much of the body as of the spirit, a pride that shines through the awkwardness and shyness. In the north the dances are more bouncing, as befits the more invigorating climate. Some of the Western provinces show a marked choreographic kinship with the Celt in music and in character. The inhabitants of the provinces lying round the capital of Madrid have a more assured bearing, and more complicated steps. In all the paysano dances the performer either snaps his fingers, thumps a tambourine or

<sup>9</sup> Linen shoes worn by the peasants.



uses castañuelas. (The tambourine is his entirely, for never does the Gitano employ it.) The castañuelas he uses with a far simpler technique than that employed by the southerner. The east of Spain is colourfully characteristic in dance-expression. The Valencian dances more daintily than any of his brothers, and the Catalan with more solemn spirit; for the latter is Spaniard neither in speech nor in soul, and his very expression remains a thing of character apart from the rest of the Peninsula.

Perhaps a table of the regions and their more popular dances would be of help to the reader. I would recommend a study of the Spanish paysano costume as an invariable guide to the region from whence comes the dancer.<sup>10</sup>

Asturia. "La Danza Prima": the oldest dance of Spain: a round dance. "Xirenguelo"; a vigorous dance of the Fandango type.

Galicia. "Muinuiera": a couple dance: in character a strange mixture of "melancholy and delight."  
"Gallegadad": an oafish dance of courtship.

Leon. "El Bailao": at weddings called "El Bollo" or "La Rosca"; a couple dance often accompanied with castañuelas.

Santander. "Las Pasiegas"; a square dance, which, beginning with dignity, soon augments to the acrobats of kick and lift.

The Basque Provinces. "Arresku," a group dance; begins with a long line of sedately stepping dancers,

<sup>10</sup> "El Traje Regional de España," Palencia.

then augments to the livelier tempo of the *contradanza*.

Navarre. "El Chun-Chun": A couple dance much like the *Jota*.

Aragona. "*Jota Aragonesa*": a bouncing couple dance accompanied by *castañuelas*.

Castile. (Salamanca and Zamorra) "*La Charrada*," Leon's "*El Baileo*," "*Fandango*," the original form. "*La Dulzaina*," the *Jota Aragonesa*.

Estramadura. "*El Fandanguillo*"—a blending of "*La Chacona*," "*El Villano*," "*El Rastrojo*," and "*El Fandango*"; performed by a couple.

La Mancha. "*Seguidillas Manchegas*": the *Seguidillas* from which grew the "*servillanas*"; however, the dances resemble each other only in name; a couple dance.

Valencia. "*Jota Valenciana*"; sometimes called "*La danza de los Huertaños*"; combination of the *Jota Aragonesa* and *Sevillanas*, though not so energetic as the first, nor so sensual as the second. A couple dance.

Murcia. "*Las Murcianas*"; very like the "*Jota Valenciana*."

Cataluna. "*Sardana*"; a round dance of serious dignity and choreographic simplicity.

*Andalucia*.—"The home of Spanish dancing is south of the latitude of Madrid in the flowery region where the caliphs ruled. . . . Where falls the shadow of a castle of the Moors, on that soil blooms the dance."<sup>11</sup> I would have you remember that the earliest dancers of Spain were "*las Andaluces*

<sup>11</sup> Kinneys, The, "The Dance," p. 155.

delicias." Born in Cadiz, the dance, much suited to the southern temperament and greatly enriched during the occupation of the Moors, blossomed in the passionate south until it became the joy of life and the reason thereof.

"The most famous of famous Andalusian dances,"<sup>12</sup> the Seguidillas, was not born in Andalusia but in La Mancha of Castile and was therefore first called "Seguidillas Manchegas." Soriano Fuertes, declaring it the oldest dance of Spain after the Danza Prima, writes, "the great variety of its figures, a modest grace and much verve without license, make of this dance the most modest and at the same time, the most gay of dances." But the Seguidillas of La Mancha gained such popularity in southern Spain that it soon became known as a dance of that region. In the shadow of the Giralda they call it Sevillanas, thus making it their own, and it is loved and danced by old and young, rich and poor alike. Otero writes of it: "niños de corta edad que espontaneamente bailan apenas pueden dar movimiento a sus cuerpecitos."<sup>13</sup>

From the Seguidillas sprang many Andalusian dances: Peteneras, El Ole, Las Panaderos, El Zapateado, La Jerezana, Las Guajiras, Las Molleras, Las Malagueñas, El Jaleo and many others of less definite and familiar title.

<sup>12</sup> Otero, José, "Tratado de Bailes," p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> "Very young children dance it spontaneously as soon as they are able to move their tiny bodies" ("Tratado de Bailes," p. 96).

Each province of southern Spain has its particular dance or dances, yet they all partake of the same grace of line, of swinging movement, of a spirit that is proud to scorn. Nearly always performed in couples, the line and counter-line of upraised arm and swinging leg are a continual delight to the eye. Changing moods govern dance and dancer; and there is a half-hidden consciousness of admiring watchers. The costumes are as colourful as dye and somewhat garish taste can make them; boleros, madronos, mantillas, combs, spangles, lace and embroidery! In this whirl of colour is the bending and swaying of an unrivalled grace and the eternal clatter of "palillos" and stamping heels. The joy is aloof; the dancer may smile, but she more often frowns; she may dance for the spectator, but she does not admit it. She is brilliant, she is sure: every movement has ordered dignity, and you nearly feel her scorn. She seeks to stir the emotions, the admiration, but never to astonish. She does not show her legs; she does not roll her hips nor shake her shoulders: but every subtle line and curve of costume and body indicate that these provocative members are there, and are only more perfect because of their concealment! There is neither the Oriental's frank and aloof admission of sex nor the Occidental's prudish blindness to it, but rather the feigned prudery veiling the not-so-aloof admission.



*Flamenco*.—For seven years prior to the reign of “los Reyes Catolicos” Andalusia had been occupied by the Moors. These invaders made upon the land such a mark of their spirit, art, and blood that it will never be effaced and has not yet been absorbed though four centuries have passed since Ferdinand and Isabella drove them forever from Spain. To-day the hybrid descendants of these Moors, living, self-segregated, in “El Albaicin”<sup>14</sup> of Granada, and “La Triana”<sup>14</sup> of Sevilla, have created an art which has shaken the world. The gipsies of Sevilla call themselves “Flamenco,” though none can tell the origin of that inappropriate name. The gipsies of Granada call themselves frankly “Gitanos,” and are somewhat less spoiled by contact with a curious world. The pure Flamenco, or Gitano, dancing is astonishingly similar to its Moorish origin. Contrary to general belief, castañuelas have no part in it. The Gitano curves hand and wrist in sinuous gesture, or beats a contra-rhythm with open palms. His feet are noisily occupied with the miracles of taconeo which have developed with the donning of heels. The foot that ventures to leave the floor is raised stiffly and from the knee. The dark face is cold yet here and there breaks through a hint of the fire of emotion that rages within. Hips swing and shoulders shake, and even more telling, one sometimes sees that strange, hori-

<sup>14</sup> Gipsy quarter of the city.

zontal movement of the head<sup>15</sup> which characterises Hindu and Arabian dancing. The Gitano dances accompanied by a guitar or by a singer who improvises "coplas" on the pentaphonic scale.

The dress of the Gitano is ruffled cotton, brightly figured, and at the back of her head sways a tall flower which is "not so much a decoration as a defiant flag of the race!"<sup>16</sup>

Less than fifty years ago these dances were not known to the public. They were spontaneous and performed by the Gitanos in their own barrios for the admiration and amusement of their fellows. Then one day there came to a music-hall in Barcelona a negro who brought from the United States the Cakewalk! The success of this exotic dance was immediate and so overpowering that the Spanish artists were thrown into a hysterical dismay at seeing their long-favoured bolero losing popularity. And then a dancer, whose forgotten name should be immortalised, found rebuttal to the high-stepping coloured boy in the barrios of the Gitanos! But how to bind into routine those improvised dances whose very fascination is the sudden changes of temperament when the restrained wildness of the soul breaks forth in vibrating turns or taconeos, only to sink again to the languor of the East? It required both delicacy and understanding, but was

<sup>15</sup> Sundari (see glossary).

<sup>16</sup> Divoire, Fernand, in an article published in *Excelsior*, Paris.

admirably accomplished in a dance which was called "Garrotin," and whose written music changes as suddenly and inexplicably as the Mediterranean winds. So, dressed in scarlet heels and ruffled silks, this "grand-daughter" of the Moorish dances came to the stage to be immediately acclaimed queen. The Cakewalk died; the bright *cuarta* of the bolero lost caste, and dance after dance in the Flamenco style appeared in café and music-hall; the Farruca, the Tango, the Marianas, and a host of others.

This is the history of the Gitana dance, that strange hybrid, whose emotionalism is as anomalous as it is gripping. There are few who have seen the Gitanos work in the full swing of this emotionalism. Any one may, for a fixed price, see them perform their steps; but, I repeat, few have really seen them dance. So few, indeed, that I have only recently again read a travel-in-Spain book which warns the tourist against paying out money for the ridiculous sight of a few dark, dirty women shuffling about the floor of a *cueva*<sup>17</sup> that doesn't look like a *cueva*. That last is merely lack of insight on the part of the writer; but I believe she has reason to be disappointed in the gypsies. Once when I had been two hours in their *cuevas* studying their execution and asking them questions, we were interrupted by the entrance of three tourists who had paid the regular sum to see the Gitanas dance.

<sup>17</sup> Cave.

They sat down, miserably alien, uncomfortable in that atmosphere. The Gitanas danced, but they had withdrawn into themselves; the performance was an affair of cold and dead steps; the repressed fire like the boiling of a closed tea-kettle that is the all of the accomplishment, was absent. After three numbers the girls collected, and the poor tourists went away, disappointed, vaguely wondering from whence had grown this giant reputation. But they had not seen the gipsies dance! They had not seen the sinuous contraction of the body in feline turn that suddenly flashes into the gatling-fire of a taconeó, only to sink, swooning, to the knees with only the faint movement of a shoulder to mark the time. They had not seen the black eyes rhythm-mad in the dark faces, nor the twisting hands reaching up as though for an agonised relief from the control of passionate movement.

Yet in spite of the rarity and difficulty of seeing the gipsies dance in their own full mood, the reproduction itself is sufficiently brilliant to make it an exciting and beautiful entertainment as performed in any café. Seen there the "cuadro Flamenco" consists of one or two guitarists, several women dancers and one or more male dancers. These all sit in a semicircle on the stage. One at a time the Gitanos rise to perform, while those seated make the "Jaleo"—that combination of palmades,<sup>18</sup> taconeó and

<sup>18</sup> Hand-claps.



shouts of encouragement, which, whether spontaneously done in the cuevas, or carefully staged in the cafés, is yet a heart-raising and entirely atmospheric affair. Seen in the cafés the dancers are usually arranged according to their merit so as to have a theatrical crescendo; but in the cuevas the whole affair takes on a sort of competition at the close of which the favourite dancer, acclaimed by the "aficionadas,"<sup>19</sup> is tossed a hat which she puts on her head and repeats her dance. Jealousies often fire up into unseemly fights between rivals at the changing and capricious decisions of the audience.

The Flamenco dance is the most sensual in existence; sensual not for what it does, but for what it doesn't do; sensual as is the Arabian woman, swathed in white from head to toe, with only black eyes showing, in comparison to the half-clothed flappers of ten years ago. There is forever the feeling of repressed boiling of great emotion, a consciousness, without contraction, of every muscle in the body; those sudden changes of rhythmic tempo do not change the tempo within.

*Summary.*—Unlike the Oriental, which lives in the past, Spanish dancing is yet growing. This is a great pity, for no good can come of an art, which has been so integral, being forever changed by outside influences which it neither understands nor

<sup>19</sup> Enthusiasts, "fans."

appreciates. To-day it is difficult, nay, I might say impossible, to see Spanish dancing in its pure form. Steps are exchanged from province to province and from type to type; the Flamencos sell their art to the paying tourist and, for him, learn the use of "palillos"; the Andalusian wears the skirtless garments of the Folies Bergères, or an "oriental" concoction with a "sombrero de queso";<sup>20</sup> the bolero breaks into taconeó; the new Fandanguillo combines the elegant grace of an adagio with the swift taconeó of the gipsies; el Vito incorporates steps of Peteneras and Sevillanas with gipsy mimic of a bull-fight; and hundreds of new dances appear every year titled according to the music or the caprice of the creator. It is a never-ending blasphemy! You must not think, with Cervantes, that "Never was Spanish woman born that was not born to dance!" For though all Spaniards are dancers in spirit, not all Andalusians are artists in the true sense of the word, and a Spanish name does not entitle you to take as authentic every detail of costume and dance. For art in its truest sense is either the unspoiled original as the Gitanas at their best moments, or the original material carefully studied, selected by culture and woven into a perfect stylisation, as the matchless Andalusian compositions of Mme. Antonio Merce, "La Argentina."

<sup>20</sup> Literally "cheese-hat," the little round velvet hat with the pointed crown and up-rolled brim.

## IX

### EUROPEAN NATIONAL DANCES

THE dance, having been born as an expression of religion and love, and being the simplest and most emotionally direct language of these two sentiments, however far it may have developed technically, makes its two fundamental generators as simply obvious as in the days of its earliest infancy. The Easterner, because of his philosophic character and his religion, which teaches that this life is only a vestibule of the hereafter, has found choreographic inspiration almost entirely in religion. We have seen that even his sexual dances are touched by a religious philosophy which exalts them to a higher plane. The traditions of the Oriental techniques are grounded in the allegory of worship that brooks no disrespect. Thus both technically and spiritually, the Eastern dances are very rich and their study is unending, since it involves a full knowledge of the history, religion, art and philosophy of these races.

Compared to this traditional wealth, the Western dance is amazingly poor; although it is to be admitted that for such demonstrations as the Wajang

Wong, the Occident has a synonym in the ballet. Yet, in treating the national dances of Europe, one cannot but be struck with the indigence of tradition and philosophic impetus. The tradition is largely one of habit; the surrounding history necessarily brief and seldom interesting; and the motive, though the excuse be May-day or what you will, always the contrasting physical outlet from physical strain. The European dances differ in costume, steps and music but, since this essay is not a technical one, these differences are hardly appropriate here. Treating only the principles, the stimulus, the artistic ideals of various phases of choreography, I find little that I can say of Europe's dances. When one has differentiated the racial characteristics one has very nearly covered the ground, since the Westerner dances *himself*, while the Easterner dances his *spirit*. Again, the incentive of many of these dances is courtship of a very naïve and simple sort, and it needs no psychologist to fathom the meaning of step and posture. We dance for the joy of movement, and to stir admiration (whether it be in the crowd or in the individual)! Our God is far from our dances; and if their strains awake a sudden surge of finer patriotism it is brought purely by the habit of association, not through any specific import of music or of step. Our dances are frank and noisy outbursts, with the feet and legs playing the major rôle. Climate, profession and racial char-



acter differentiate in performance dances whose cold technique is nearly identical. There are steps in the Swedish Polska which are technically duplicated in the Jota Aragonesa. For, after all, the instrument upon which the dancer plays is the human body, and the natural limitation of arms and legs per person forces a certain executive kinship.

To artist and æsthete these dances have interest as the spontaneous forerunners of the developed form of the ballet, and as the most perfect mirror of racial character. Since, I repeat, it is not coherent that I treat these dances in technical detail, I give below only such historical and genitive information as will best present to the reader a view of the cardinal elements of their artistic representation or stylisation.

*British Isles.*—The dances of England are divided into two classes, those performed by men alone, and springing from combat; and those performed by groups and used as celebration. In the first class are the Sword Dances and the Morris Dances<sup>1</sup> (which latter is a derivation of the former). In the second class are the country dances, the dance round the Maypole, etc. The people of England have lived always very close to their soil. The feeling for their country is an unexpressed, yet nearly holy adoration. So the dances born of the

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the costumes and characters of the earliest Morris Dance see "A History of Everyday Things in England," 1066-1799, by the Quinnells, 17th Century, p. 137.

earth are as healthy as the trees and flowers, and therefore eminently sane and delightful. The Country dances are simple in step and merry in mood, for they were originated by folk who had laboured all the day long in the fields; and their execution, though technically simple, nevertheless gains its charm through the easy swaying of the body, a movement which is given only to those who walk much on uneven country lanes. The Sword Dance calls for all the dexterity, force and restraint for which the Englishman is justly known, and the intricacies of its group formations are possible only to one of a race which can eliminate his own personality to the betterment of the community. The Morris dance, of flying ribbons and jingling bells, is a perfect embodiment of the "Merrie England" of poesy. Performed in the spring of the year when joy will not be curbed, the group work is subservient to the enthusiastic improvisations of the individual.

Like sagas of a Fighting Clan are the dances of Scotland. Born of an unchanging national pride and a staunch fealty to hallowed tradition, they are stepped to-day as they were once stepped on Highland battlefields. Long, long ago in the Laird's Hall on the eve of battle, two swords were crossed on the floor and, to the song of the warlike bagpipe, each dancer executed the sword dance to foretell his luck on the morrow. For it was said that if

the flying feet so much as brushed a blade, then death in the coming battle would be the dancer's portion. Knowing the solemn portent, then, the dance was to show controlled nerves and a calm mind in the face of probable death. Always loath to make public his emotions, and more than loath to appear moved at the thought of danger, the Scot neither smiles nor frowns when he performs to-day that dance which tested his courage in the past. Even in the fling, which originated as a celebration of victory, he has dignity: in this brisk working out of taut nerves never giving way to the boisterous joy of less controlled peoples. The fling is not a dance of soft beauty but of precision and skill. The arms are military in their change of position, as though the indulgence of beauty were a pastime for men less strong. Performed to-day it is nearly an ancestor-worship in its conformity to the original in step, gesture and spirit. To see it is to glimpse the clansmen preparing for battle!

All the laughter of Ireland is in her dances! Reel, Jig, and Hornpipe chuckle epigrams of wit through the tappings of heel and toe. The dry humour of the Hibernian is in the passive arms and nearly solemn face which so belie the fast-chattering joy of the feet. For the Irish dances are of a purely pedal technique. There is no middle way with an Irishman; if he dances he dances with his feet! Why then take the flavour from them by a

lot of complications with arms and body and face? Why, indeed! It is the feet which do the dancing, and virtuosity is in attaining a great variety of sounds from the clog and shuffle. It is the rhythm which is the spirit of the dance; and even as the steady beat of the savage tom-tom works like a narcotic on nerves and brain, so does the insistent rhythm, embroidered over with intricate contrarhythms, lift the heart of the watcher of the Irish Jig and Reel.

*Scandinavia.*—The Scandinavian loves joy. His laughter is ready, unaffected and honest. His dances are healthy physical outbursts of naïve gaiety. Subtle neither in step nor pantomime, there is, nevertheless, an energetic completeness in both. Because of the cold climate the dance of the man is vigorous in leap and handspring; for the same reason the woman, heavy with woollen petticoats, confines herself to whirl and pantomime. And such pantomime! Broad and unabashed, sure of sympathy as long as it is a tale of happiness or humour. Not one dance contains even a shadow of sadness. They have caught, in a net of rhythm, the summer sun to make it shine through their dark winter. There may be the simple pantomime of loom and shuttle; or the more direct one of competition of two ladies for one man; yet always the story is told with an exaggerated humour that is nearly clownish. It is strange that such fighters,



such navigators, should have in their dances so little of war and the sea. They are all of the soil and the village; homely things, happy things. Battle and their sharp, dark seas are serious things, sad things, and are not to be remembered when one celebrates!

*Holland.*—Although as choreographically poor as her neighbour, Belgium, I cannot pass unnoticed the Lowlands, because of the innumerable times which stylisations of its dances have appeared on the stage. Yet there exists in Holland only one dance of definite character. It is called the Fisherman, and is executed in group. Performed in the wooden shoes, it follows that, as actual dancing, it is scarcely worth noticing. But the entirely interesting costume of the Dutch has caught the eye of the stylising artist, who has not pursued his research beyond the most obvious of these. The costume selected for constant reproduction is only one of over a hundred different styles traditionally authorised. Indeed, Holland is as rich for the student of typical costumes as it is poor for the student of typical dances. Unfortunately the aforementioned stylising artist is as ignorant of Dutch character as it is possible to be; for the true Dutchman is neither awkwardly funny nor clumsily gay. He is sober, slow in movement, almost irritatingly dignified and is not at all given to nonsensical gaiety.

As for making a spectacle of himself for the amusement of the crowd—it is unthinkable!

*Germany, Belgium, France.*—These countries which have most enriched the dance-art in its highest form, are yet to-day the poorest of European countries in the folk-dance. It would seem that in the hurry and complication of modern life, the folk have almost ceased to dance in the old ways, but prefer to take their enjoyment in watching those dance who have devoted their lives to the art. In any event the folk of these countries now have little which lends itself to reproduction in artistic form.

Germany, in spite of her recent advanced movement in the dance-art, has a distinct interest and respect for the past. No other nation has done so much for the resuscitation of forgotten histories and nations as they. This national characteristic is reflected in the several folk-dances which existed up to the time of the World War, for each one was a relic of a nearly-forgotten page in the history of pre-Christian Germany, and took the form of pageant or square dance.

Belgium, too, recalls the past; for her only available dance-expression is her Carnival of Binche which originated in the time of the Inca Conquest and is reminiscent, at least in costume, of Inca warrior and Spanish Conquistador of that day.

France has two dances of the peasants, the Bour-

rée and the Farandole. Both are square dances of a certain charm of figure, but with little lightness of step. The Bourrée is generically a sort of clog, whilst the Farandole is hardly more than a romping game of "follow-my-leader." Certainly the Bourrée lends itself to stylisation, though no artist to my knowledge has seen fit to adapt it. The character is gay; the intention is of grace, although the wooden-shoed peasant can rarely attain it; and there is a coquettish charm which is characteristically French. Both Vuillier and Charbonnel<sup>2</sup> give many pages to the peasant dances of France, and wax most enthusiastic about them.

*Bavaria*.—The Schuhplatteltanz is quite enough in itself to make any nation famous! The simple beauty of the woman's movements, greatly enhanced by the wide sweep of her skirt, are an interesting foil to her partner's staccato and intricate slapping of his heels, thighs, and hands. Though lighter in expression, the spirit and humour is not unlike that of the Scandinavian dances. The Schuhplatteltanz is gay, pantomimic and quick of tempo; but it is that technique of the man's which gives it the greatest interest. With his hands he beats out a complicated accompaniment to the music on his heels and leathern breeches. This necessi-

<sup>2</sup> The books of both Vuillier and Charbonnel are titled "La Danse." References to the French peasant dance can be found in the former on pp. 197 to 207, and in the latter on pp. 294 to 329.

tates a good deal of jumping, and an excellent performer is, par force, an athletic young man.

*Portugal.*—The neighbour of Spain is, choreographically, not unlike those Iberian provinces which lie against her borders. Her dances, though not many, are both lively and colourful. That most often brought to the stage is the Fado Portugaise. In this the lines of rolling spins are punctuated by stamping feet and accompanied by snapping fingers and striking palms. Nearly always performed in public by Spanish dancers, much of its national character is lost, for it is not to be supposed that Spain and Portugal share an identical personality. The Portuguese are less subtle, less romantic, more conservative, more considerate and less imaginative than the folk of her sister nation; and accordingly, her dances are more frank and yet more modest.

*Italy.*—Very strange it is that the country which gave birth to the finest form of Occidental dancing, the ballet, and which has produced nearly all the greatest maestros of that art, from Balarasini to Cechetti, should be so little a dancing people as to be poor in folk-dances. True, each duchy claims the name of a popular dance, yet few are found who can describe it and nearly none who can perform it. Only the Tarantelle of Naples survives, and its steps are so lively and colourful that it has, at least abroad, been called the national dance of Italy. Much interesting and amusing speculation as to the



origin of the name has been written. The coincidence of the tarantula, the great spider of the poisonous sting, being similarly named, has brought forth many theories as to the beginnings of the dance; it is the result of the bite of the tarantula; or of the fact that the tarantulas move their legs in time to certain rhythms; or it is a sure cure for the bite; and so on and so forth. Far more believable is the assumption that the name is derived from the little village of Tarente.

The Tarantelle is fast of tempo and merry of mood, and the tambourine, on which instrument the Italian may be a virtuoso, plays no small part in it. From Herculaneum came the tambor, and who can guess but that the dance itself was born in the bacchanalian processions of that remote time? Certainly it is formed in strong crescendo movement, punctuated with spins, and it is to be remarked that the gaucherie of the usual peasant dances of Europe, is in no wise to be seen. The Tarantelle is as lithe and flowing as any dance of the East!

*Slavic and Balkan Dances.*—Scarcely less colourful than the dances of Spain are those of the Slavic and Balkan lands. Often and exquisitely stylised by native finished artists they have, more than any other folk-dance, been brought to the realm of the dance-art. The costumes themselves are a feast for the eye. Colours of brightness and antipathy are

happily blended by artist and peasant alike, if he be Slavic. For it has been said by many distinguished travellers that the taste which has made famous the recent Slavic scenic artists is a common talent among folk of the same blood. It is widely known that the delicate appreciation of beauty is in-born in these peoples. Certainly the dances of the folk have a variety, a harmony, a strength and grace unexceeded by any save the Andalusian.

Every century since 200 A.D. has seen the political boundaries of Eastern Europe changed. The southern extremity, or present-day Balkans, were early influenced by the Greek culture, and later by the Roman Empire of which they were a part. Still later this section was settled by peaceful Mongols who filtered down through the steppes; overrun by Visigoths and Lombards; parcelled out under the sovereignty of Austria; and finally fell under Turkish dominion. Thus all the warring characteristics of a continent have gone to make the folk expressions of the Balkans.

The northeastern section, although belonging at one time to France and later to Germany, is, racially, pure Slav. And so, since the expressions of a folk do not change with the opinions of a peace pact, let us view the dances of these peoples under the changeless title of "Slavic." The "national principle" of which statesmen prate is nothing more nor less than the blood of the race that wells up to

the heart and brain. The folk-dances of a dancing people are the expression, the outlet, of a nationalism that is deeper than politics and more lasting than boundaries. In the song and the dance alone does the peasant—he who is nationalism in its real sense—relax fully to reveal his heart. Here is a race, “simple, sympathetic, unrestrainedly romantic, violently impulsive,”<sup>3</sup> dignified and chaste; a curious mixture of contrasts in temperament, of joy and sorrow, softness and grimness, love and war. These abrupt changes of mood are perfectly reflected in the music which changes suddenly and violently, like an enforced gaiety breaking through an eternal sorrow. (These sudden changes of mood and music are, it is interesting to note, also apparent in the Flamenco; and only these two, of all Europe’s peoples, are bred of the blood of the East and West.)

As a dancing race the Slav reaches high levels of virtuosity, and even the simplest round-dance is seldom without ample decoration by the individual. Whether the choreographic composition be of a single body or of a group, there is an eternal harmony of line naturally felt and subconsciously followed. And through it all flows the subtle exoticism that is felt only in those of Oriental blood.

*Russia.*—The Cossack dance, and its derivatives of Russia, is a perfect example of the changing moods of the Slavic dances. It is composed in two

<sup>3</sup> Kinneys, The, “The Dance,” p. 191.

parts: Adagio and Allegro. "In each part we see the traits most natural to the people, and which were formed in historic times under other conditions.

1. "Adagio. Length, freedom, tranquillity of movement with much dignity and grace and with a little softness and simplicity; all relating to the traits that were formed during the period when all Russian women passed the whole time in their 'teremas' (house of Russian style), retired from the world, working and singing, thinking melancholy thoughts about life but never seeing it in reality, never leaving the house nor being seen except on the rare occasion of visits.

2. "Allegro. Expresses, with the gay and popular songs, the vivacity and carelessness, the humour and pleasantry that were born in a people still a little barbarous and simple, whose sadness and gaiety were somewhat naïve. All the traits natural to the Russian people are portrayed in their national dance and in the simple music created from the most popular and beloved songs."<sup>4</sup>

The Court dance of Russia, so beautifully done by members of the Russian ballet, is taken from the peasant dances. This is generally performed with a girl soloist in the centre of a ring, and is pantomimic in spirit. Slow, gliding steps are accented by sudden

<sup>4</sup> Princess Chrinski Chicmatoff. From "The Dance" by the Kinneys, pp. 194 and 195.



stamps; the gay schottische is punctuated with stately bows; when the mouth laughs the eyes are careless; when the mouth is grave the eyes invite. The hands and arms are always important, and a handkerchief is not infrequently carried.

*Hungary.*—The Hungarian dances, somewhat lighter in character than the Russian, are scarcely less athletic. They are joyfully abandoned and of long and graceful lines; their character is gipsy in its careless boldness. The adagio and allegro of Hungarian dance movements are too familiar through Liszt's immortal rhapsodies to need mention here. But this contrast of reckless delight and slow melancholy is as apparent in the choreography as in its accompaniment. The best-known dance is called the stardas (or Czardas), but to-day it is difficult to find it in its original form, since it has been pushed back into the steppes by encroaching jazz.

*Bulgaria and Rumania.*—The choreography of Bulgaria and Rumania is nearly identical in spirit, save that a wilder air of quicker tempo accompanies the former. For brevity, I treat them together. The most popular dance of these countries is the Hora,<sup>5</sup> a round-dance of rather indolent rhythm, performed in a double circle. It has been said that it springs from the dances seen in bas-reliefs of the Roman Empire. Certainly it has about it an atmosphere of great antiquity, but the passionate

<sup>5</sup> Turkish word meaning "dance."

gaiety which one believes to have been a part of the Roman character is entirely lacking executed as it is without joy or ecstasy. Far more Mongolian than Roman is the cold placidity with which the man regards first the lady on his left and then the one on his right. The "batuta" is a livelier dance performed in smaller circles of mixed sexes, but of too entirely rustic a character to appear possible of stylisation, or artistic interest.

*Czecho-Slovakia.*—Reminiscent of the Sword-dance of England is that of Czecho-Slovakia, for it also is performed by men alone who, holding aloft their swords, achieve interesting and intricate figures. The long-popular polka is of Bohemian origin, and may now, geographically at least, be claimed by Czecho-Slovakia. The dances of this people are light and coquettish in character, the woman's part is decorated with spins, and the man's with leaps, the "backbone" step being almost invariably the polka. A sort of stylised pantomime of familiar occupations is often used, as the Cobbler's Dance in which the kneeling couple pounds fist on fist. Also the man, lifting the woman high in the air by means of placing his hands on either side of her waist, is common. The "Odesmak" is an interesting group in which the leader, dancing in the centre of the ring, sets the steps for the others. This leader is always a man who carries a Slovak stick over which he kicks agile heels. Each step begins slowly but

increases in rhythm to a lively velocity. Handkerchiefs are sometimes used.

*Serbia.*—The kolo (which, in Serbian, means “circle”) can also be considered the dance of Montenegro. It is not unlike the hora, though much simpler in step, which consists of the easy swinging of the legs and punctuating stamps. The familiar bridge of arms is, though simple, pretty to watch, thanks to the colourful national costumes. The kolo is somewhat monotonous and not without wistfulness. The character changes according to the performer. “A young virgin dances that one may admire her grace and modesty; while a wife, strangely beautiful, troubles the hearts with the captivating air she gives to all her movements.”<sup>6</sup> Without doubt the warmth of the climate and the Mongolian blood have lent a restraint to the Balkan dances which is not apparent in the Slavic.

*Ukraine.*—No more colourful figure is to be found in European history than that of the Ukrainian Cossack. True to his zest for life his dances do not lack in daring virtuositities. The low squatting position nearly always attributed exclusively to Russia is a feature which he performs with a laughing verve. When the Huzuls<sup>7</sup> dance the Kolomyjka there is a flying of feminine ribbons and a stamping of masculine boots that lifts the heart!

<sup>6</sup> d'Istria.

<sup>7</sup> Ukrainian mountaineers living around Kolo Meja.

It is fast and sprightly, and filled with hops and wide leaps. The coquetry, which is always present in couple dances, is the frank and healthy sort bred by mountains. The first two syllables of the name of the dance suggests a kinship with the Serbian kolo, but, apart from the incidental figure of the bridge-of-arms, the dance in both step and spirit is unrelated.

The dances of Eastern Europe are dances of action, of technique and of spirit. Theirs is a complete physical freedom: arms swing wide, the legs work high from the hip; the back is supple and the head high. Spinning turns, heavy stamping and invigorating leaps are frequent.



## X

### AMERICAN DANCES

**N**ORTH AMERICA.—Because of its great extent, certain sections of North America have developed folk-expressions which seem nearly incomprehensible to other sections. This, coupled with a poverty of tradition, make nearly impossible a true national folk-dance. That it in nowise lacks character, however young, is proven by the folk-music which has grown up in even this short time. Or, I should perhaps say, folk musics, for although the cowboy song is a folk expression as is the negro spiritual, they have nothing in common one with the other. For some unexplained reason the dance has followed belatedly in the footsteps of the song. So belatedly, in fact, that its existence is nearly unadmitted, but ethnologic dancing in many types does exist in the United States, and has been brought by her young artists to the concert stage.

The folk-dance of tradition, which is the common property of both the United States and Canada, is that of the original Americans—the Red Indian. The various tribes of this race are rich in

dances whose meanings and sentiments are as complex and profound as the steps are simple. First, dancing for them is never a matter of light pleasure but a definite means to an end; and, strange as it may seem to Caucasian scientists, this end is not seldom attained. Here is a type which is a living example of one of the primary genitives of the dance, religion. Equally interesting is the fact that the other source, sex, is entirely absent from any of the red man's choreographic creations. Theirs is the dancing of a race that has lived always in the open air. In spirit it is clean, dramatic, natural, interpretive, "hallowed by prayer and vivid with rejoicing."<sup>1</sup> I do not mean to idealise the Indian, nor to claim that his code of morals agrees with ours, yet I do claim that, as dancer, his motives are higher than most of the peoples of the western hemisphere. His dances have each its history, its own steps, chant, and movements. They are each prescribed as to performers—whether men and women, men alone, women alone or (most rare) a single warrior.<sup>2</sup> There are some few comic dances, as they see humour, and personifications of birds and beasts. But the majority are used as worship, or to propitiate certain gods for rain, luck in hunting, etc. Not infrequently the Indian performs in mask and elaborate regalia. A study of the dances (and

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Thompson Seton, "Rhythm of the Redman," Introduction, vii.

<sup>2</sup> So far as I can ascertain in only one tribe, Makah, does a single woman dance alone.

costumes) of each separate tribe is an interesting task of years, and one too complicated to be even touched on here. All present two common characteristics, rhythm and drama, and the movements are the antithesis of the conventionalised forms of the Caucasians. They are vital, strong, with a characteristic carriage of the torso, and are never spectacular in the sense of designing to astonish the watcher, for they spring from a nature that is dancing for its soul and its God. The rhythm, carried by tom-toms of all tones, the chant, flute, and whistles, changes but is persistent. The dramatic action swings through the entire gamut of natural emotions: of joy; of war; of the household tasks; to bring luck in hunting, in war, and in crops; to simulate deer, eagles, coyotes; to bring rain; to exorcise evil spirits; to consecrate manhood. Those artists who have studied the Red Man's dance most deeply and who have understood it with affection have, happily, stylised it without marring the deep emotional effect in an effort to improve technically on the simple steps.

Scarcely less colourful than the Indian dance, though unordered by a tradition, is that created by the negro of the United States. His dances have no means, no histories, no definite steps; yet their character is as defined as it is different from all others. The negroes who were brought to the United States were from the Congo, and much of

that far tribes' rhythmic emotion is in the expression of the American black men. Rhythm, and the syncopation of rhythm by the singing, dancing negro, have given birth to that rhythm of jazz which has swept the world and bids fair to become, with time, the real folk-expression of the United States.

There is a nearly-oriental disconnection of the negro's articulations which he uses to give an irresistible humorous effect, for when he is happy, he is among the few peoples who love to make others laugh at him, for then he only laughs the louder and is the happier. All the dances of negro origin are founded on this dis-articulation: the Charleston (in the knees and hips); the Black-bottom (in the hips); the Double-shuffle and Pigeon-wing (in the ankles), etc., etc. "'At boy sho is loose!" says the Southern darkey in admiration of his brother's terpsichorean faculties. Jazz, the creation of the American black man, has been of much interest to the stylising dancer of Europe. Let us hope that the American dancer will, forgetting his scorn of "home-made" art, soon turn his attention to this folk-expression and bring it in better form to the concert stage.

The old square dances of English origin certainly present little to attract the notice of the dance-artist. Yet they have been presented in character pantomime to a public which received them with



enthusiasm. Unfortunately they hold an appeal only for those who knew the original, and the foreigner is entirely unimpressed by their presentation. The Cakewalk is of more interest both technically and historically and deserves to be mentioned as the first public hit of the dance-art of the negro, whom we will eventually have to thank for the best of our folk music and dancing.

*Mexico.*—There is a tremendous confusion existing between the dances of Spain and those of Spanish-speaking countries. Thoughtless people invariably think they are the same. Contrarily, they are, in most cases, remarkably dissimilar. No Hispano-American country is æsthetically as little touched by any European influence as is Mexico. The heritage of artistic understanding left by the Aztec Empire has given an unique colour to modern Mexican art in all its forms. In considering the influence of the Aztec on existing art expressions, it is not to be forgotten that theirs was a civilisation advanced, æsthetically and politically, to impressive proportions; "the character of its (Mexico's) ancient inhabitants, not only far surpassing in intelligence other North American races, but reminding us . . . of the primitive civilisation of Egypt and Hindostan."<sup>3</sup> Choreographically, Mexico is Aztec, from the beaded cotton costumes of the women to the solemn dignity of the men. Many

<sup>3</sup> Prescott, William A., "The Conquest of Mexico," Vol. I, p. 7.

of the dances have been handed down unchanged, and those which have evolved have done so without departing from the genitive spirit. All over the country the Semana Santa is celebrated in pageant and dance whose details have altered little since Father Bartolome de Olmedo <sup>4</sup> substituted the statue of the Virgin for the local representation of Texcatlepoça. Each province has its characteristic dance as, of old, each had its personal incarnation of the bloody war god. Oaxaca celebrates once a year a representation of mighty Montezuma and his councillors, a weird dance whose fame attracts spectators from over the entire country.

Less apparent, but not less strong, is the mark of the Aztec on the secular folk-dance. Above all it is in the motivating spirit that the couple dance differs from that of Spain. Whether it be the simple La Zandunga Oaxacueña (in which the *lady* woos and, like Eve, wins with a fruit) or the more sophisticated Jarabe Tapatio of the Capital, it is as free from passion as field-flowers, and as frank in spirit as a ritual. There is no consciousness of body or of sex. The wooing is like two solemn children getting acquainted. Glances are direct; coquetry is open laughter against solemn dignity; dancers swing in rhythm and shout to find everything so surprisingly delightful. Whatever "civilisation" may have

<sup>4</sup> Prescott, William A., "The Conquest of Mexico," Vol. I, pp. 222 and 223.

done for Mexico, it has not brought the taint of sensuality to her dances. There the body is a mere vehicle for the spirit, and there is no exaggeration of curve for the sake of beauty of line. The Mexican dances his emotions for himself and his partner. He is not performing for the watchers. He tolerates their presence and forgets them.

The national dance of Mexico, whose characteristics embody the ancient Aztec, a flavour of the passing Spaniard, and the modern Mexican, is the Jarabe Tapatio. The sight of it evokes a cheer from the native son, however alien the skies under which he sees it. It is the living, laughing symbol of his patriotism. Every detail of costume, every step and gesture, have grown too tradition-laden to admit of the tiniest alteration. The Jarabe originated in the dim past of the Aztec Empire when the Guajalote<sup>5</sup> was considered a sacred bird; when the Tribunal of Music<sup>6</sup> sat to encourage the arts and sciences of the nation. Surely, then, this dance was first a part of some religious ritual, all the rest of which has been forgotten, for it is a choreographic pantomime of this holy fowl, wooing the hen. As light and staccato as the steps of birds are the first tentative crossings of "China" and "Charro." The China, laughing, makes faces, while the Charro struggles to maintain his dignity. Softer, more sen-

<sup>5</sup> Turkey-cock.

<sup>6</sup> See Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico," Vol. I, p. 111.

timental, the second phrase, followed by a repetition of the staccato taconeo of the opening. Then the Charro flings his huge, matchless sombrero <sup>7</sup> to the floor. Watchers cheer! He has proposed! The China tosses her head and, proud of her typically tiny feet, she steps onto the brim and dances round it. Her toes are pointed and crossed. She holds her skirt wide, like spread wings, and bends her body lower and lower. Those watching cheer again. She has accepted! (Besides she has circled the brim without mishap or misstep.) The China stoops to the sombrero and, rising, puts it on her own black head. The music flies into the "diana" <sup>8</sup> and the dancers beat wild feet to a finish with the Charro's zarape wrapped in possession around his won bride.

Are you one who believes the Mexican is slow? Watch him perform the Jarabe! And in the altitude of his capital whose rarity of air is so breath-taking. Have you teased and tipped other nations to dance to you and teach you a few of their characteristic steps? Tell the Mexican you would learn his dances! His face lights up with pride and appreciation, and he will spend weeks guiding you through the mazes of his intricate numbers.

*Central America.*—Besides Mexico and Panama, Central America is of little interest to the seeker after dance-art. For when the Mexican people were

<sup>7</sup> Hat.

<sup>8</sup> A melody always played to close the Jarabe, and often played during the applause which follows a great success of any artist.



the centre of a rich civilisation, the marshes of Ecuador and Nicaragua presented an insurmountable difficulty to the nearly-unconquerable feet of Cortez. Where he found the Aztecs a cultured and artistic people, he saw the tribes further south still in a very primitive state. To-day, still isolated from a passing world, these nations dance only among their Indian tribes, the aristocracy of their centres borrowing their dances from New York and Paris.

For many centuries prior to the opening of the Canal, Panama was a stopping place, a port of call, in short, a gateway for the wandering Spanish warrior and enterprising Oriental merchant. Ergo the dance (the Tamborito) and costume (traje pollera) of Panama are an interesting and curious mixture of Spanish and Oriental influences. The Tamborito is for a couple, as are nearly all the dances of the isthmus and southern continent, and, as you can guess, the theme is courtship. The accompaniment (drums and a nasal chant) are purely Oriental as are the Chinese ornaments in the hair of the lady, and her slippers; but her wide-flounced skirt and deep turns are Spanish in line.

*West Indies.*—The West Indies are peopled by three different races and their subsequent mixtures. As I have heretofore stated, there is no better way of tracing the ethnologic history of a land than through its folk-music and dance. Of a sexuality which is to be expected of such a triplicate mixture,

the Islands' music and its accompanying dances share in equal parts the sensual languor of the black man, the barbaric strength of the red and the sophisticated allure of the white. It has been written that the unexpurgated edition of the Cuban Rumba "is not suggestive simply because it leaves nothing to be suggested!"<sup>9</sup> Certainly the negroes and mulattoes of these islands, when they "cut loose," do the most entirely sensual dance which has sprung from the West. And they add to it a sex-consciousness that makes it infinitely more shocking than the primitive sex-dances, or even the worst of the Oriental dances, which latter are always builded upon a certain philosophy. No, the West Indian dances are of such a spirit that those who have tried to modify them for public presentation have still been considered lewd; and the artist who has endeavoured to stylise them to an artistic form has, in making them decent, taken from them the very essence of their being. In short, dances from these islands are not to be included in a treatise on the dance-art!

*Venezuela and Colombia.*—I include under one head these two countries because of their poverty and kinship in choreographic endeavour. Although distinctly negroid in character, their dances are less frank in movement than those of Cuba. There is

<sup>9</sup> Ted Shawn, in an article "Havana Nights," published in *The Dance* magazine.

much importance attached to the rhythmic shuffling of the feet, and of course the suggestive movement of the hips is in evidence. The Joropo and Bambuco are of rare interest to the ethnographic student, but of none to the follower of the dance in its artistic forms.

*Brazil.*—In spite of her great territory and colourful mixture of races, and, still more surprising, in spite of nearly a century of imperialism, Brazil the Beautiful is comparatively poor in expressive dances. The Maxixe is the only one she really claims as her own, and, though the music is interesting, the steps have been so strongly influenced by Europe, changing with the changing manner of the modish world, as to be without form or character. To-day the Maxixe (or Machiche) is a free translation of a Parisian tango as it might be done by negroes. All dances of a mixed race are sensual. It remains only for the freedom of modernism and the veiling of sex-consciousness to degenerate the dances of a hybrid people into a vulgarity which completely destroys the enjoyment of the beholder.

The Zambra, that dance of the African negro whose posterity is seen in every country of South America, takes in Brazil, a rather faster, jazzier tempo and, though unlike the Maxixe in that it is done without couples clasping, it is nevertheless

suggestive and depends almost entirely on body-movements.

*Peru.*—Peru, soil of a vanquished empire, is the richest of South American countries in dance-expression. Of Paysano<sup>10</sup> dances she has but one, but from the Incas she has a score or more remembered and many hundreds forgotten. The *Marinera* found its way to Peru through Chile, where it was brought by the African negroes who came afoot through the Cordilleras. In Peru it was called “*La Chilena*” until fairly recently when trouble between the two republics inspired Peruvians to find another name for their dance. Nevertheless the *Marinera* is different from the Chilean *Cueca* only in the speed which the coolness of altitude makes possible, and in costume. *Vicuña* wool died in the brightest colours and woven in intricate designs of Inca origin, is the fabric for the entire outfit of both man and woman, and produces a kaleidoscopic effect at once pleasing and breath-taking.

In the Inca dances we find a mine of interest. The Inca music, built, like the Oriental, on the pentaphonic scale, is, nevertheless, uncommonly varied in theme. The accompanying instruments of ancient times were the *kenna* (a flute made from the shinbone of a man), rattles of gourds, primitive drums, and sometimes brass and copper trumpets. The dances were performed at stated feasts and gen-

<sup>10</sup> Peasant.



erally by men. Pantomime was seldom but effectively employed. Secular dances were of an athletic nature, as Waraki Tusuy (Sling Dance), or of war, as Wachi Tusuy (Arrow Dance). The beating of bare or sandalled feet in cross-rhythms is a virtuosity of these dances, and they are rich in facial and bodily expression, a thing remarkable in the so-called "primitive" peoples.

Sacred dances take a livelier air here than in worshippers of a less happy god. In the Spring Dance a group of maidens, carrying garlands of wreaths of flowers, step lightly and smile much. The Dance of Libation, also for a group, is performed around a huge pot of tshitsha (beer made of maize), the performers carrying large drinking cups which they fill from the pot and empty over their shoulders as offering to Inti, the Inca Sun-god. With the coming of the Spaniard the old dances died or changed form, and new inspiration came to the Inca. Of the latter period perhaps the most interesting is one, seemingly unnamed, and almost without steps, but whose costumes and gestures are a bitterly humorous caricature of Pizarro and his men.

Certain dances are to-day as popular as they were during the glory of the Empire. For three days, beginning January 6th, moves the slow dance to celebrate the Pascua de Reyes. Undoubtedly this Christian demonstration sprung from a like wor-

ship of Inti, though its origin is not proven. It is a slow, rather stiff stepping about necessitated by the costume, which is long, and tight, and heavily trimmed in beaten brass. The head-dress is enormously high and heavy and created of hundreds of flowers, both natural and artificial.

For a funeral the bereaved family hire professional dancers to follow the body to its last resting place. During the ceremony they dance in a circle around the grave, and as soon as the interment is completed they dance *on* the grave and thus beat down the sod. Returning home the same dancers put on their liveliest performance to cheer the sorrowers. In days past the funeral dirges were played into an instrument fashioned of pottery. For days after the interment the music kept on without pause, and of such melancholy were the airs that listeners have died of sorrow. Of late years the playing of these dirges has been prohibited.

*Chile.*—We have already noted that many negroes destined for Lima were left in Chile, Bolivia, and North Argentine because they were unable to stand the cold of Peru. These Africans brought to Chile the seed of her dance, the Cueca. The dance, as they brought it, was called Sama Clueca, which means "hen with chicken," and doubtless refers to the persistency with which the man dancer follows the woman. Later it digressed to Samacueca (a form of which is also danced in

Bolivia and North Argentine), which of late years has been shortened to Cueca. The music is a jazzy combination of harp, voice, and clapping of hands, frequently punctuated with shouts of encouragement or applause. The words sung have rhythm and rhyme but little sense. Or, failing this classic accompaniment, a single singer accompanies himself on the guitar while another person drums out the complicated rhythm on the body of the instrument. The theme is again courtship, and the floor design set, though the steps are not. The Chilena, constrained in step and gesture, eyes down, brushes the floor with a tiny foot, of which she is inordinately proud. The "huaso,"<sup>11</sup> by contrast, stamps about as noisily as possible, marking time with his great rowelled spurs. The handkerchief is the show-off piece of the dance. With it the lady beckons or wards off the man. Its use is delicate, complicated and lovely. How it identifies itself with the Cueca is hard to say. Perhaps it appeared when it was used as a signal of comrades in the revolution. Perhaps it came from Arabia, with the name Zambra.

*Bolivia.*—In Bolivia there is El Bailecito, a criollo dance to a three-quarter rhythm and much like the Cueca. It is danced in pairs, and with handkerchiefs, but the spirit is more melancholy than that of its Chilean sister. Of Inca origin, the Chaluya is characterised by a sudden change of tempo from very

<sup>11</sup> Chilean cowboy.

slow to very fast. It is performed by groups of men on religious feast days; and though a Catholic demonstration now, it is very easy to see in it the conversion of a pagan ritual. Like the religious dances of Peru, its course is three days. Huayñu is also of Inca name and origin, but much distorted by European influence. It is a couple dance; a competition of zapateo between man and woman.

*Paraguay.*—The dances of Paraguay are of Guarany origin, but borrow their present names from Spain and France. It produces a strangely humorous effect on the watcher to see somewhat over-fat Indian beauties shuffling bare feet in stoic rhythm, and suddenly be told that one is seeing the polka, the galop, or the Malagueña! Although there is little difference in the steps of these dances—all being a sort of two-step with frequent pauses—they have distinguishing features. The polka is a couple-dance in waltz position. The galop is a woman's solo and is performed before the image of the Virgin to propitiate her before asking some special favour. The Malagueña is punctuated by sudden, sharp and unbelievably strong beating of the bare feet called, somewhat optimistically, zapateo. But the most novel of the Paraguayan dances is the Santa Fé. It is a competition of women. All the dancers step into the dancing space, balancing on their heads bottles of wine or beer. Clutching firmly the hem of full skirts, they move



about with surprising abandon, in extemporised steps, decorated with wide movements of the upheld skirt. She who dances longest without dropping her bottle is declared winner.

*Argentine.*—Argentine presents to the seeker an astonishingly long list of titles of typical dances. And yet closer inspection shows there is little apparent difference in them, although the Argentino will, at this observation, be insulted beyond the telling, and will insist that only personal stupidity could confuse any two of them. Certain it is that the Argentine knows more of her dances than the other countries of the continent, and information about them is both more definite and more easily obtained. In fact, the fault lies on the other side, as the difficulty becomes one of weeding out uninteresting detail.

There are fourteen dances of individual construction. Of these five have derivatives, which bring the number of universally accepted Argentino dances to forty-two! Obviously it is impossible to treat these dances in detail. Furthermore, I repeat, only the "gaucho" is able to appreciate the subtle differences.

The names of nearly all the dances are derived from the "coplas" sung as their accompaniment. Most are couple dances and employ zapateo, and many are decorated with the handkerchief and castañuelas.

Their origin is Spanish (the Fandango arrives in the New World unchanged except in name—Fandanguillo), African (Zamba), or Indian ("Palapala" and "Triunfo"). And let me at this moment prick the popular bubble of the tango. The dance is *not* Argentinian. It was born in Spain and came to Buenos Aires via Paris. Having long been danced in the dives characteristic of any port, it has taken on a certain colouring that makes the Argentinian interpretation of the tango different from that of any other people. But the expressions of a race do not come from the human flotsam of a wharf. The only "Danza Gauchesca" faintly resembling the Tango is "El Caramba."

Perhaps the best known dances are El Gato, La Chacerera, El Pericon, La Firmeza, El Malambo, La Zamba, and El Cuando.

El Gato is a dance for one couple (or for a group of couples dancing only to their partners), danced sometimes with castanets, but more often with the snapping of fingers. It is of origin both Spanish and Indian. The music rendered by guitars, violin and the harp, is a syncopated three-fourths rhythm, and the figures are "called," although only for guidance in the musical measures, as they are always the same. With a waltz step, the man and woman make a wide circle completely round each other. Arriving at their original position, they execute a smaller circle in place. Then the lady marks a restricted

rhythm with her feet while the man goes into an extravagant zapateo, another small circle in place and another exhibition by the man. A half-circle to change places: the music stops and the "caller" cries "Segunda!"—and they do the same figures all over again! It sounds very uninteresting but it is not so to watch. The amazing agility of the man precludes such a possibility. The characteristic looseness of ankle in the heavy boot often gives the effect of the dancer's legs being composed of rubber. The arms have no responsibility and for the face, the woman wears a look of pained boredom, and the man one of concentrated fury.

La Chacarera is much like the Gato both in floor composition and in ornament. There are only three figures. First, circle in position; second, complete circle to right (with castañuelas); third, same as first, save that man does zapateo—obviously the only real difference is the tempo of the music.

El Pericon is an offspring of El Cielito. It is for six or eight couples, and, in spite of its popularity, has little of interest save the graceful use of the handkerchief, which moves between the dancers. A waltz step carries the couples through a routine not unlike the cuadrille.

La Firmeza, to a three-fourths rhythm, is a couple dance of naïve pantomime.

El Malambo is a competition of zapateo between two "gauchos" dancing alternately, to the rhythm

of guitar or clapping hands. It is without song or "copla" recitation but is surely the most interesting of all for the audience. The competition results often in steps defying fantasy, gravitation, and physical construction.

La Zamba, of African origin, has been mentioned before in connection with the Chilean Cueca. It does not change its form in its Argentinian surroundings.

El Cuando is a strange hybrid of the minuet and El Gato. The lady's right hand in the gentleman's left, the couple advance, to a minuet tempo, down the floor, bow to one another and return up to bow again. Suddenly the rhythm changes to that of the Gato, the dancers raise arms (frequently with castanets) and make a complete circle (waltzing) around each other; a series of whirls and the music and the dancers re-enter a dignified minuet. There could not be imagined a dance more characteristic of a new world which charmingly combines the dignity of an old aristocracy with the joy of the Paysano.

There are other dances with distinguishing and interesting features. The steps of El Sombrerito circle a hat on the floor. El Llanto mimics the words of its accompaniment. "Ay, ay, dejan me jorar"<sup>12</sup>—and the dancers weep (with or without a handkerchief to assist them).

<sup>12</sup> "Ah, ah! Let me weep!"



El Triunfo comes from Peru, and is a version of the Inca festival dance at the Raymi feast. El Escondito, El Conejo and El Palapala mimic animals with their steps; the first finds inspiration in the cat; the second in the rabbit, and the third, with complete generosity, uses no less than eight animals and birds! This Palapala is the most Indian of all the "gaucho" dances. In the words of its music Quichua and Spanish mix indiscriminately. It is a dance for one couple and is entirely given over to passages and mimic of the animals, in which the poncho<sup>13</sup> is much apparent, playing a useful part as wings when the moment of the eagle appears.

*Summary.*—They are, after all, much alike, these dances of South America. There is the handkerchief of Arabia, and the zapateo of Spain, in many. Much alike in design and in conception, but not alike in performance! The negroid Joropo of Venezuela, for all its zapateo, has no spiritual kinship with the Indian Bailcito of Bolivia. The Gato, half Indian though it is, is plains-born, and has not the same soul as the Marianera. It is not the *steps* that make the folk expression; it is the climate, the earth danced on, the work of the folk, and the blood of the race. It is, without doubt, the blood of the dancing Spaniard that makes the Hispano American countries so rich choreographically. From

<sup>13</sup> The woollen blanket worn as a protection against cold and rain.

the Rio Grande to the Tierra del Fuego the people dance with a zest that bespeaks the Latin.

The "Melting Pot" of the world has not yet been able to so fuse her races as to produce a spontaneous folk expression. The three dance-elements of the United States—the Indian, the English and the negro—are as distinct in their expressions as they are in racial colour. And none of the three can be called a characteristic expression of America as we know it to-day. I believe that the Indian will always stand aloof. That, unfair as it is toward the first Americans, they will lend no colour to the eventual folk-dance of the United States. If one can judge by present tendencies, the dance will take its lively technique from the negro, and its clean spirit from its first settlers, the English.

NOTE. Permission to re-print certain parts of the material on South America has been courteously granted by *The Dancing Times*, in which publication appeared an article of mine in three parts (July, August and September, 1931) titled "South American Dances" and treating the subject in some detail.

## XI

### A FINAL WORD

**B**EFORE leaving the reader I must have another personal word with him. Lest he, vaguely hurt by my unveiled attacks upon "Mme. Public," believe that I have exaggerated conditions to prove my point. I beg to assure him that every incident I have used in these pages is one within my personal knowledge. Indeed, these incidents are responsible for the book. It is, if you like, an answer to them.

Furthermore, let not the Reader suppose that those qualities which I have quoted as a part of a school are to be found in every dancer who represents it. The perfect artist is as rare as the Phœnix! "Mme. Public" can consider herself thrice blessed if, in her lifetime, she sees one faultless representative of each of the three types of dancing herein treated. "To seek perfection is the highest ambition of man," but to expect perfection is to be absurd. Dancing is an art for a mature mind and an adolescent body. This is one of the reasons why perfection is more rarely found in the dance than in its sister arts. For in the others the artist is just

ripening to the apex at an age when the dancer's "instrument" has already passed the first beauty of youthful vigour.

These are the three types: each as important as the others; each as interesting as the others; each as artistic as the others. The choice lies only in personal taste and talent. Ballet is for the Worker; he who, unafraid of endless hours of physical labour, finds joy in the surmounting of nearly unconquerable muscular difficulties. The Free Dance is for the Thinker; he who, with the courage and humility of clean intelligence, finds philosophies in the dark hours of early morning. The Ethnologic dance is for the Student; he who, tireless in research, knows that knowledge is its own most perfect reward.

I close this book with the humble hope that it will prove useful to those who are taking their "first vows" to Terpsichore, whether it be as "artist" or as "æsthete"; and with sincere thanks to those writers whose books, hereinafter listed, have furnished me with both fact and inspiration.



TABLE OF DANCES MENTIONED  
IN TEXT

# TABLE OF DANCES MENTIONED IN TEXT

<i>Dance</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Country or Province</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Of Arms	58	China	2 Mandarins 2 Guards 2 Scribes 20 Dancers	Unknown	Represents the joys of war: performed with shield and battle-ax, or spear
Arresku	83	Basque	Group		Vigorous and warlike
Bailao	82	Leon, Spain	Couple		Sometimes called "El Bollo" or "La Rosca"
Ballecito	116 120	Bolivia	Couple	Spanish	Bright 3/4 rhythm in two coplas
Bambuco	112	Colombia	Group or couple	Spanish and African	Very primitive in step
Batuta	102	Bulgaria Rumania	Round dance		Rustic character
Blackbottom	107	U. S.	Solo or couple	American Negro	
Bolero	79	Spain	Couple	Invented by Cerezo	The 3/4 tempo much quickened in the modern version

Bollo, El	82				See "El Bailao"
Bon Odori	61	Japan	Group		Folk dances: subjects, religious or activities
Bourée	96	Auvergne, France	Group		3/8 tempo
Bourée	96	Limousin, France	Square dance		3/4 tempo: accompanied by song
Cachucha	80	Spain	Solo or couple	Chaconne and Sarabanda	Has been absorbed by Seguidillas
Cakewalk	24 87 108	U. S.	Couple	American Negro	In the nineties introduced to music-hall and ballroom
Can-Can	24	Paris	Solo or group		High-kick dance of music halls in nineties
Caramba	118	Argentine	Couple	El Gato	
Chacarera	119	Argentine	Couple	Spanish	Combination of 3/4 and 6/8 tempos: not unlike Gato
Chaconne	78 79 80	Spain	Couple	"Ole Gaditane"	Court-dance, 1500

TABLE OF DANCES MENTIONED IN TEXT—Continued

<i>Dance</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Country or Province</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Chaluya	116	Bolivia	Groups of men	Inca	Catholic demonstration
Charleston	107	U. S. A.	Solo or couple	American Negro	
Charrada	83	Castile, Spain	Couple		
Chun-Chun	82	Navarra, Spain	Couple		Much like the Jota, but of more dignity of movement
Conejo	120	Argentine	Couple	Indian	Free pantomime of animals mentioned in song-accompaniment
Contra-danse	27	Paris (1650) Bretonne	Square dance	England	The Country Dance of England: introduced at English court in 1600
Cossack	100	Russia	Male solo		Two parts: Adagio and Allegro
Court	101	Russia	Girl solo in ring		Flirtation
Cuando	119	Argentine	Couple	Gato	Combination of Minuet and Gato: with castanets



Cueca	115	Chile	Couple	African Negro	Fast 3/4 tempo: characterized by handkerchief in hands of girl
Cygne, La	33		Solo	Fokine	To music of Saint-Saëns: toe-dance immortalized by Pavlowa: pantomimic
Czardas	101	Hungary	Couple		Brilliant movements: fast
Danse du Ventre	72	Turkey, Arabia	Solo		Pantomime of sexual possession
Danzas Habladas	78	Spain	Group		Allegorical, mythical ballets: Philippe IV
Danza Prima	82	Asturia, Spain	Round		Oldest dance of Spain
Double Shuffle	107	U. S. A.	Solo	American Negro	Dates before 1860
Dulzaina	82	Castile, Spain	Couple		Much like Jota
Escondito	120	Argentine	Couple	Gato	Also called "Gato Escondito"
Fado	97	Portugal	Couple		Bright 2/4 tempo
Fandango	78 79	Spain	Couple	Andalusian	Appeared about 1700

TABLE OF DANCES MENTIONED IN TEXT—Continued

<i>Dance</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Country or Province</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Fandanguillo	83	Extremadura, Spain	Couple	La Chacona El Villano El Rostro El Fandango	Original: adapted by folk from Fandango of 1700
Fandanguillo		Andalucia	Solo	Sevilla	Of recent origin: very slow
Fandanguillo	117	Argentine	Couple	Spain	Nearly the same as in Spain
Farandole	96	France (Tarascon Provence)	Square		Simple, rustic
Farruca	81	Flamenco	Male solo	Sr. Faico	Much like Garrocin, Tango and Alegrias
Feather	58	China	Group		Represents spirits of four parts of world: carry white or varicolored plumes on a stick
Firmeza	119	Argentine	Couple		Pantomimic
Flag	58	China	Group		Patriotism: dancers carry flags
Folies de España	78	Spain	Group		Adopted also in the French Court

Gallegada	82	Galicia	Couple			Oafish courtship
Gato	118	Argentina	Couple			Two parts: alternating two-step around partner, and swift taconeo
Guajiras	84	Andalucia	Couple		Seguidillas	3/4 tempo
Hora	102	Bulgaria Rumania	Round		Roman Empire	Very slow and dignified
Huaynu	116	Bolivia	Couple		Inca	Zapateco competition
Hornpipe	94	Ireland	Solo			Step and tap
Jaleo	84	Andalucia	Couple		Seguidillas	3/8 tempo
Jarabe Tapatio	109	Mexico City	Couple		Aztec	Wooring: characterized by woman dancing on hat. Tempos 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/8
Jerezana	84	Andalucia	Couple		Seguidillas	
Jig	94	Ireland	Solo or couple			Step and Tap
Joropo	112	Venezuela	Couple		African	Very primitive
Jota Aragonesa	84	Aragon, Spain	Couple			Very lively: 3/8

TABLE OF DANCES MENTIONED IN TEXT—Continued

<i>Dance</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Country or Province</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Jota Valenciana	84	Valencia, Spain	Couple		Combination of Jota Aragonesa and Seguidillas: 3/4
Kawiki Hula	73	Hawaii	Solo or group		Adventures of King David Halakana
Kolo	103	Serbia	Couple		Stamping and hopping: 4/4
Kolomyjka	103	Ukraine	4 Couples		Very lively: 2/4
Liliu E Hula	73	Hawaii	Solo or group		Setting forth attributes of Queen Liliuokalani
Llanto	120	Argentina	Couple		Pantomime of weeping
Malagueñas	84	Spain	Couple	Seguidillas	Smooth, 3/4 rhythm.
Malagueñas	116	Paraguay	Group	Spanish	
Malambo	89	Argentina	2 men		Zapateo competition
Marinera	113	Peru	Couple	Cueca	Very fast 3/4
Maxixe	113	Brazil	Couple	African	Sensual: slow 2/4



Molleras	85	Andalucia	Couple	Seguidillas	
Morris	92	England	Group	Moorish	From 15th century to 18th century: all-day festivities: bells and hand- kerchiefs
Murcianas	83	Murcia, Spain	Couple		Much like Jota Valencia
Muinera	82	Galicia	Couple		Music similar to that of Brittany and Ireland
Odesmak	102	Czecho-Slovakia	Couple		Bright 2/4
Ole	84	Andalucia	Couple	Seguidillas	
Palapala	120	Argentine	Couple	Quichua	Mimic of animals
Panaderos	84	Andalucia	Couple	Seguidillas	
Paseigas	82	Santander	Square		
Passeccalle	78	Spain	Couple		Court dance, 1550
Passepieid	78	France	Couple		Court dance, 1550: still danced in Bretonne
Pavane	78	Spain	Couple		Court dance of both France and Spain in 1550

TABLE OF DANCES MENTIONED IN TEXT—Continued

<i>Dance</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Country or Province</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Pigeon Wing	108	U. S. A.	Solo	American Negro	Dates before the Civil War; later applied to most characteristic step, a sort of primitive cabriole
Pioneer	107	U. S. A.	Square	England	Virginia Reel, Lancers, etc.
Polka	102	Czecho-Slovakia	Couple		Merry, skipping, 2/4
Polka	116	Paraguay	Couple		Primitive copy of the ballroom polka of 1830
Polska	92	Sweden	Couple		3/4 tempo: acrobatics for man and spins for woman
Piuli Hula	74	Hawaii	Couple		Bamboo dance: performed sitting down, with a split bamboo wand in either hand
Reel	38	Ireland	Couple		
Rosca	82				
Rumba	111	Cuba	Couple	African	See "El Bailao"

Samacueca					See "Cueca"
Santa Fé	117	Paraguay	Solo woman		Fast 3/4: competition of carrying bottle on head while dancing
Sarabanda	80	Spain	Couple		Court dance, 1550
Sardana	83	Catalunya, Spain	Round	Pep Ventura	Dignified: 6/8
Schubplatteltanz	97	Bavaria	Couple or group		Acrobatic jumps for man and spins for woman: characterized by rhythmic beating of hands on feet and leather pants
Seguidillas	83	Andalucia	Couple or 2 couples	Cachucha	Practically identical with Sevillanas
Seguidillas	83	La Mancha	Couple	Cachucha	3 coplas of 3 parts: couple change places after each part: fast 3/8
Sevillanas	83	Sevilla, Spain	Couple or 2 couples	Seguidillas	6 coplas of 3 parts: somewhat more graceful and slower than the Seguidillas
Sombbrero	120	Argentina	Couple	Spanish	Performed around a hat thrown on the floor: with castanets

TABLE OF DANCES MENTIONED IN TEXT—*Continued*

<i>Dance</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Country or Province</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Spilled Meal	71	Arabia	Solo	India	Making a design in meal spread on the floor with feet while dancing: known also in Greece
Sword	92	England	Group of men		
Sword	93	Scotland	Solo		Performed before battle to foretell luck
Sword	102	Czech	Group of men		(There are sword dances of nearly every nation which carries that arm)
Tango	117	Argentine	Couple	Parisian	Ballroom
Tango	81	Spain	Solo	Flamenco	Faster in tempo than the familiar ballroom tango, and as different in every other particular
Tarantelle	98	Italy (South)	Couple	Possibly Herculaneum	One of the most brilliant of European folk dances
Tordion	77	Spain	Couple		Court dance, 1550



Triunfo	120	Argentine	Couple	Inca	Said to have been danced by the Incas at the Raymi feasts
Vito	85 90	Spain Andalucia	Solo		Appeared on streets in 1842: as solo pantomimic bull-fight
Uliuli Hula	73	Hawaii	Group		Gourd dance: performed seated
Wachi Tusuy	114	Peru (Cuzco)	Solo and group	Inca	A lone Indian dies fighting ringed round with Inca warriors
Waraki Tusuy	114	Peru (Cuzco)	Solo	Inca	Showing ability with the sling, a popular Inca weapon
Xirenguelo	82	Asturia	Couple		
Zamba	119	Argentine	Couple	African	
Zanbra	113 116	Brazil	Couple	African	(A finer version also danced in Chile)
Zandunga	109	Oaxaca, Mexico	Couple	Aztec	The woman is the aggressor in this wooing
Zapateado	84	Andalucia, Spain	Couple	Sequidillas	Swinging 6/8 tempo

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

*Absolute Dance*—A form of the Free Dance created in Germany and using dynamic rhythm as the inspiration of expression. Characterised by its complete lack of any musical accompaniment.

*Arabesque*—The weight on one foot (let us say the right), with the other (left) raised, with straight knee, behind until it is horizontal to the leg holding the weight. In many cases the body is lowered until it also is horizontal to the leg holding the weight. One arm (in this example the right) is held forward from the body and horizontal to the ground, the other backward from the shoulder and also horizontal to the ground.

*Æsthetic Dance*—A form of dance which combines the worst features of both the ballet and the Free Dance, having made so free with the technique of the ballet, that there remains only an insipid hybrid.

*Apsaras*—Celestial dancers (Hindu).

*Ballet*—See page 38.

*Choreographer*—One who designs dances. Not to be confused with ballet-masters, whose function is to teach dancers, not dances. However, the two functions are sometimes combined in one person.

*Choreography*—The design of a dance: its routine. Used also as a synonym for "dance."

*Coryphée*—A dancer of the group of the ballet.

*Copla*—The two-line rhymes (nearly always of spontaneous improvisation) sung as accompaniment of certain Spanish and Spanish-American dances.

*Cuadro Flamenco*—The semicircle of Spanish Gipsy dancers, singers, and musicians, who, sitting, await their turn

to spring into the centre and perform; and while waiting encourage the soloist already there with clapping of hands, stamping of feet and shouts of encouragement.

*Cuarta*—See "entre-chat."

*Desi*—Popular form of Hindu dance.

*Devadasi*—Consecrated temple dancer (Hindu).

*Dervish*—Mohammedan priest or ascetic. Their worship-dances take the form of spinning round and round on one spot for hours uninterruptedly.

*Dance-Art*—See page 5.

*Entre-Chat*—From a stand in fifth position (see "Positions of Feet") spring straight up into the air; at the height of the jump the foot in front goes back and the one in back comes front: on returning to the floor the feet re-change to return to the original position. The entre-chat is performed with straight knees, pointed toes and the feet moving very closely around one another.

*Expressionistic Dance*—A form of Free Dance stressing the "inner quality rather than the outer appearance of the subject" (I quote Elizabeth Selden). A dance in which the expression of the inner feeling is the *only* scope, disregarding any form or theory of technique or movement.

*Ethnologic Dance*—See page 67.

*Flamenco*—Spanish Gipsy. More especially those of the barrio of La Triana in Sevilla. Used also to designate the type of dance originated by the Spanish gipsy.

*Free Dance*—See page 52.

*Gitano*—Spanish Gipsy. More especially those of the barrio of El Albaicin in Granada.

*Greek Dance*—A form of the Free Dance taking its inspiration from existing relics of Greek art. Chiefly concerned with the creation of beauty of line.

*Hula*—Hawaiian word meaning "dance."

*Interpretive Dance*—(Sometimes called "Interpretative"). A form of Free Dance which somewhat combines Visualisation of Music and Expressionism. That is to say, the dancer allows the music to awake in him an emotion,



and this emotion carries him into its expression through movements, both emotion and movement being dictated by the music which has been their inspiration. The direct antithesis of the Absolute Dance, since it is entirely dependent on music while the Absolute dance is entirely free of music.

*Lasya*—Narrative Hindu dance.

*Liberator*—One who frees from restraint. In this case one who frees the art from the precedence of restraint.

"*Looking for her Lover*"—A step in Hawaiian dancing. Slide right foot forward: slide left foot forward: slide right foot forward; raise left foot, from knee up behind, at the same time raising right arm shoulder high in front; slide left foot back; slide right foot to left foot, at the same time making a circle with right arm horizontal to floor, and gently swinging hips; slide left foot back; slide right foot to left foot, repeating movement of right arm and hips.

*Maillot*—A stockinet garment covering the body from toes to waist. Recently also applied to the garment of the same fabric, but covering the body, as does a bathing-suit, from shoulder to thigh.

*Marcheuses*—Women who, scantily but elegantly costumed, paraded through the Opera of Paris.

*Marga*—Classical Hindu dance.

*Mechanistic Dance*—A form of Free Dance which is based on the mechanical movements of machines.

*Miko*—Consecrated temple dancer (Japanese).

*Modernistic Dance*—A form of Free Dance partaking of equal parts of Expressionistic and Greek dancing. That is to say the inner urge is Expressionistic while the outer form is Greek.

*National Dancing*—A dance created and performed by the folk and expressive of their nation.

*Natural Dance*—A form of Free Dance which is based on the natural movements of the body; i.e., walking, running, skipping, etc.

*Natya*—Hindu word meaning "dancing" or "acting" or both.  
*Nautch*—Oldest form of Hindu dance, being song and dance combined.

*New Dance*—First used by Isadora Duncan as descriptive of her own art. Later used by some exponents of the new form which the dance took in Germany. A term which seems applicable (and is therefore applied) to any form of dance which for the moment is somewhat different from the current forms.

*No*—Japanese word meaning "accomplishment," and used to designate the theatre arts; dancing, acting, music, and poetry.

*Nrta*—Hindu rhythmic dances without theme.

*Nrtya*—Set Hindu dances of especial subject.

*Odori*—Japanese word indicating the popular or folk dances.

*Ou*—Chinese word indicating "dancing," "acting" or both.

*Padding*—Meaningless movements used to fill in the music between those movements which carry definite import.

*Palillos*—Castañuelas.

*Parivatita*—Hindu head. See page 92.

*Pas*—Steps.

*Pas de deux*—Dance of two persons.

*Pas Frappees*—Steps in which one foot or ankle beats the other; as the entre-chat.

*"Picking Flowers"*—Hawaiian dance-step. The feet together, both toes twist simultaneously to the left; then the heels lift and move simultaneously to the left (this movement produces a slow, rhythmic progression to the left). At the same time the body is bent forward until both hands touch the ground; lifting the body the arms open to the sides at shoulder-height, then touch each other before the chest; open again and touch each other above the head.

*Pirouette*—A rapid spin on one foot. In some cases the body making more than one revolution before stopping or changing weight.

*Positions of the Arms*—First: arms curved and nearly touching in front at height of chest. Second: arms at shoulder-height held out at sides. Third: one arm in second, the other up above head. Fourth: one arm in first, the other above head. Fifth: both arms curved, and held, nearly touching above head.

*Positions of feet*—First: heels together. Second: heels about ten inches apart and on a line with each other. Third: the heel of one foot placed in front and at the arch of the other. Fourth: one foot directly in front of other foot at about ten inches distance. Fifth: the heel of one foot to the toe of the other, and vice versa. In all positions the toes are turned out at a ninety-degree angle, and the weight is evenly distributed on both feet.

*Prachedec*—Pagoda-like headdress of gold, leather and jewels. Cambodian.

*Prakampita*—Hindu head. See page 92.

*Ramedjanis*—Professional dancing-girls. Hindu.

*Rhythms*—Musical—The beat and phrasing in music.

Dynamic—The arc of inner tension connecting the beginning and the end of a movement.

Emotional—The rhythm of feeling; most commonly expressed in breathing and the beat of the heart, but capable of many more subtle expressions.

*Romantic Revolution*—The revolution of an immortal group of dancers of the Imperial Russian Ballet against the forms then weighing down their art. This revolution meant far more than the mere declaring of an ideal, for to these dancers it meant sacrifice of the position for which they had worked for years—that of Royal dancer to the Czar. It was no mean thing to flout Russian authority. It is said that the appearance of Isadora Duncan was the inspiration for this fearless, if bloodless, revolution.

*"Round the Island"*—Hawaiian hula step. With the left arm on the hip and the right held across in front of the

chest, the feet make small steps which turn the body about on one spot. At the same time the hips swing in wide circles.

*Routine*—The order in which the steps follow one another in a dance.

*Sundari*—The most characteristic of Hindu heads. See page 92.

*Sur le Pointe*—On the tip end of the toes.

*"Society Dancer"*—This somewhat clumsy appellation I have combined myself for lack of an existing word to express my meaning. The "society dancer" follows the art for amusement, as does the "dilettante"; and like the "amateur," he is not rated as a professional—by any save himself. But that last phrase takes him entirely out of Mr. Webster's experience, and so I was forced to baptise him myself. The "Society dancer" differs from the "semi-artist" (see pages 18 and 19) only in social pretentiousness.

*Taconeo*—Heel-work. Beating of the feet, or heels in rhythmic pattern. Synonym for zapateo. (I would call attention to the difference in "taconeo" and the rhythmic *tapping* of the Irish jig and like dances. "Taconeo" is *beaten*, with the ball, with the heel, or with the entire foot. The jig is *tapped* or *brushed* with the toe or ball.)

*Tandava*—Hindu dance representing a cosmic activity.

*Tirascina*—Hindu head. See page 92.

*Traditionalist*—One who is in favour of the opinions and customs transmitted from ancestors to posterity. In this case, one who upholds the old forms of art, believing it should remain unchanged.

*Tutu*—The conventional, short, fluffy, tarlatan skirt worn by the ballet dancer.

*Visualisation of Music*—A form of the Free Dance concerning itself "with the relating of bodily movement to music. Music Visualisation, as opposed to Interpretation, does not in any way presuppose that the dancer is intending to tell or interpret the meaning or mood of a composi-



tion. It is translating the actual structure, rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically, as possible into bodily movement." (I quote Ruth St. Denis, the originator of this form of dance.)

*Wajang Wong*—The Javanese Theatre. See pages 93 and 125.

*Zapateo*—See "taconeó."



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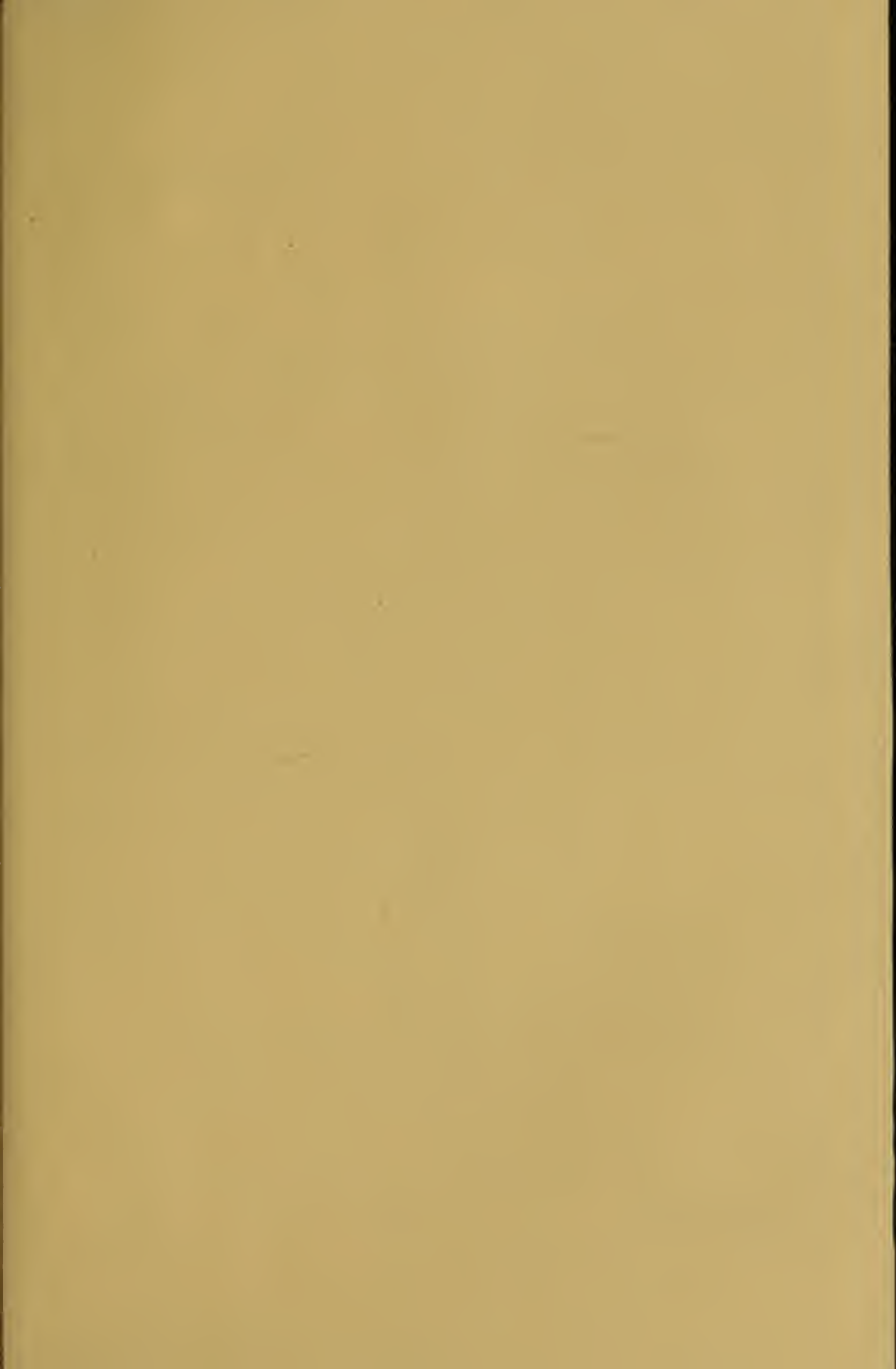
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